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AN AUTUMN IN EGYPT.

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CHAPTER I.

WESTWARD HO!

It is not, perhaps, too much to assume that those who have spent a few Octobers in India—more particularly in Bombay—retain reminiscences thereof more vivid than pleasant. Those who are in a position to recall such reminiscences can probably realise that the prospect of a change, be it to the fashionable heights of Matheran, the full-flown festivities of Poona, or away to sea, would possess a charm all its own ; and that one who left the P. and O. Office with a ticket for Suez in his pocket, would be the possessor of joys and anticipations with which few could intermeddle. So it was with the writer of these lines one fine afternoon in

October 1869: to be exact it was the afternoon of Saturday, October 23. It had been decided that he should proceed to Egypt, to note and chronicle the great doings there. For was not the Suez Canal, the work of years and the wonder of nations, soon to be opened, with *eclat* unheard of before? And, as that Canal was to revolutionise the trade between the East and the West, was not Bombay, of all cities in the world, deeply interested in the events that were about to come to pass? So, provided with letters from Government House for Colonel Stanton, the Consul General in Egypt, off the writer started—a happy Special Correspondent once more. Moreover his home for the next fortnight was to be the good *Behar*, one of the fine fleet of P. & O. steamers, the like of which never have sailed, and never will sail, in Eastern waters. A more excellent and pleasant set of officers than those of the *Behar* never met together—Captain Hall, always kind,

genial and watchful of his ship and passengers ; Mr. Ritchie, the Purser, the essence of gentlemanly good-nature, and beloved by all on board ; Dr. Stephenson, who saw to it that neither physical nor social life stagnated among the passengers ; Mr. Macpherson, the Mail Agent—poor Simon, always so happy and cheerful, he died as Bombay was sighted on his return voyage ; and Collyer, his assistant, the occasion of many a merry moment, and the hero of many a wonderful tale. With these and a pleasant party of passengers, the voyage to Aden, and thence to Suez, ranks high among the pleasant memories of the past.

If all goes well there cannot be much to record of the voyage of a P. and O. Steamer between Bombay and Suez, in the most pleasant season of the year in these seas, and with only a dozen passengers, or so, on board. Everything ought to pass very quietly, and as a rule, under the circumstances, it does so. Never was that rule more closely ob-

served than on board the *Behar* between Bombay and Aden. The Indian Ocean was like a mill-pond ; not a ripple was observable but what was caused by the ship herself, and the words "sea legs" were never once used without a blush. Neither, as it happened, was there any sail nor any signal to be seen—a matter of deep regret to all, especially to those who had invested in powerful binoculars before leaving Bombay, in order specially to note the sights of the voyage.

For once, indeed, locusts, with which many districts of Western India were then over-run, were a god-send ; and the movements of a little sparrow, which found not where to rest its foot except on the deck of the *Behar*, were so closely watched that the poor creature found no place of repose from stem to stern except in a dark nook of the Captain's cabin, where its privacy could not be rudely invaded, nor its hunt after flies and "all such" interrupted by the proximity

of the idle and the curious. Whence the birdie came, we did not much trouble ourselves ; but we wondered much about the locusts. Before leaving Bombay, we were under the comfortable impression that these creatures dared not, under pain of death from natural causes, approach to within a certain distance of the sea—the theory being that sea air ‘ played the mischief ’ with their lungs, whereupon they sickened and died. But if this rule holds good in the main, there certainly are some hardy exceptions ; for in the middle of the Indian Ocean, hundreds of miles from land, there were our friends the locusts, not in millions as we left them in fertile Guzerat, but certainly in dozens oft repeated. How they came there was very evident—they must have flown ; but how they managed to fly so far without suffering from *mal de mer*, the pangs of hunger, or some other ill—that was a question on which no one found himself qualified to express any decided opinion. And they did not

seem to be suffering from anything in particular. They were precisely the same species of locust that was sent down 'on view' to Bombay in soda-water bottles from Guzerat, and they were as lively as possible. Therefore it was that they were a god-send, as I have said, for, numerous as they were, any individual member took a great deal of catching. This catching of the larger ones for the Doctor and other enthusiastic naturalists to pickle, was most interesting occupation for three or four days ; and probably the mention thereof will be of interest to naturalists elsewhere. Seeing that these locusts continued to cover the awnings and crowd the rigging for days--fresh supplies every morning--they must have been spread over a great extent of sea, 600 miles at the very least.

As the locusts began to lose their attraction, people began to look out for the Rock of Aden. On the morning of Friday (October 29), powerful eyes, aided by powerful

imagination, descried the high hills of Arabia very far off ; and on the afternoon of that day, the land was distinctly visible. Saturday morning saw us steaming round Ras Marshag into Aden, long before the last man had finished his matutinal pipe, and gone below to put off his pyjamas, and to put on more suitable morning attire. This we all considered a very good run, especially for the *Behar* ; for she left Bombay very late on the 23rd, and here she was in Aden very early on the 30th. The Chief Engineer, a recognised authority on more questions than one, declared he never thought the old ship could have done it.

At Aden there was not much to see—and yet even Aden is progressing. In two or three parts of the promontory new buildings were springing up rapidly, not double-storied barracks or anything of that sort, but streets of dwelling-houses and bazaars, the outcome of the growing enterprise of the inhabitants themselves. New hotels or shops near Steam-

er Point there were none ; nor were there any new wares in the old ones, so far as I could see—barring bicycles.

An item of news was picked up in Aden which may possess some interest. Aden was in the throes of getting an organ for its church, and like most other places in the same circumstances, found considerable difficulty in raising the money. They said Rupees 2,000 would suffice, and of that they had raised a little over Rupees 1,000 ; but the odd hundreds were found hard to get. There were, however, men of resources in Aden ; and these had hit upon a happy device, *viz.*, to give new arrivals in the East, fresh from England and burning with sympathy for missionary enterprise, an opportunity of bestowing their last English coin (a half sovereign, say) to aid this work. The Purser of the P. and O. had been supplied with subscription lists,—at least the Purser of the *Behar* had, and untiring were his efforts to swell his sum total. It was proposed to

make it an established custom on board this good ship to play a game at "bull" every day after dinner on behalf of the Aden organ. How the plan succeeded, I am not in a position to say.

From Aden we sailed at 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, our movements quickened somewhat by the knowledge that the *Deccan*, with the Calcutta passengers, had left nearly three days before, and that our arrival at Suez would be eagerly watched for. As our voyage had been hitherto, so did it continue till we were off Jibbel Teer, when a fine fresh breeze from the northward set in, and the *Behar* now and then gave a snort and an angry toss of her head. For two days this continued, and during that time several persons were the victims of delusion—fancying themselves ill; but the others laughed at their fancies, and said they only stood in need of sympathy and 'something strong.' Under the operation of this *regime*, the sickness quickly disappeared, and those

whom in the morning Melancholy had marked for her own, in the afternoon trod the deck with perfectly obedient legs, and wondered what they were to have for dinner, with real curiosity on the subject.

On Thursday morning the *Behar* was off Shadwan, and all binoculars were out to search for traces of the lost *Carnatic*. Nor was there any great amount of patience or perseverance needed ; for there, away in a snug bay between Jubal and Shadwan, rode the boats which we knew to be watching the hidden treasure. A closer search disclosed a couple of red buoys, and between them could be seen the yard-arms of the fore and main masts. A boat was seen to put off; so the *Behar* lay to. A crew of sturdy Arabs soon pulled alongside, and three men came on board—an Englishman, a Turk, and an Arab. The Englishman—the gunner of the *Carnatic*—came to report progress, and to get a few loaves; the Turk, to see whether we could give him a few charges for his

revolver; and the Arab, to ascertain if he could dispose of a few coarse fish—the result of his two days' fishing. Of course the loaves were supplied, and the revolver replenished; but the fish were not wanted. These men said they were greatly pestered by the Bedouin Arabs and by ill-conditioned Greeks, who made piratical inroads upon them in the hope of getting possession of a few boxes of specie. Twenty-five boxes of specie had been recovered, and a few pieces of copper. Operations had for some reason been suspended for a time; but great hopes were entertained of being able to recover all, or nearly all, when the work was resumed. Captain Grant was at Suez, but was daily expected to return.

The evening of the 4th of November was distinguished beyond other evenings on board the *Behar*. After tea, instead of breaking up into small sets for whist, bezique, backgammon, and what not, all assembled in the fore saloon to see the first

dress rehearsal of "Bombastes Furioso" by the amateur artists of the *Behar*. Great anticipations had been formed by the invited; nor were these anticipations disappointed. The scenery, especially when one considered the situation, was tasteful in design and exquisite in execution: the dresses were really excellent. Nor were the whispers of any prompter heard, for his occupation this evening was gone. Each Thespian knew his part, or something better instead—and; to tell the truth, the interpolations caused a deal of fun. The play was not for us; we were only allowed to have a fore-taste of what was in store for those whose happiness it might be to return in the good *Behar*. But we fully appreciated the kindness of the officers that led them, at great trouble to themselves, to arrange a special representation for our benefit. The passengers on the return voyage had a treat in store for them, and if they enjoyed it half as much as the little company did that evening, they must

have risen all the better and brisker for it next morning. It is due to the officers of the *Behar* and to all others who improvise entertainments of the kind for their passengers, to assure them that their exertions are not in vain, and that these evenings are often remembered, and the incidents thereof recalled, when those who laughed and cheered thereat are widely and, it may be, for ever separated.

Having said good-bye to friends on board, we proceeded on shore, landing at the Steamer Wharf, opposite the well-known Suez Hotel, early in the day. One who has travelled much or been long in the East is almost sure to meet friends in Suez ; and so it was with us. Several officers of H. M. S. Indian troop-ship *Malabar*, then in Suez Harbour; were watching on the Pier, among them the genial Woodruffe. A party was at once made up, donkeys were engaged,—“ Billy Thompson,” “ Yankee Doodle,” “ Captain Snooks,” and others—and off we rode, ladies

and all, to Little Chalouf, to have our first look of the Suez Canal. Great was the fun attending that ride across the desert, as those who enjoyed it will long remember. Returning in time to catch the special train for Alexandria, those whose destination was England proceeded on ; and those whose duty it was to remain in Egypt, bade them god-speed on the platform, and prepared for the morrow.

Next chapter will open at Cairo ; and it, as well as the following chapters, will be given pretty much as written, in the form of the original letters to the *Times of India*, with all their imperfections thick upon them.

CHAPTER II.

THE GATHERING AT CAIRO.

Cairo, November 7.

SUCH is the uncertainty that prevails in every quarter regarding the ceremonial of the 17th instant, that it is impossible for me at present to write at all definitely regarding it. The best authorities—*i. e.* those who, without being in any way immediately connected with the Canal, yet know precisely how matters stand—predict three days of confusion confounded; and they may safely be set down as knowing nothing about it who pretend to have the programme cut and dry already. That there will be a grand ceremonial of some kind or other, so grand that it must occupy three days at least, no one doubts. And that ceremonial will begin at or near Port Said; but where or how it will end is a question that neither

M. Lesseps nor Nubar Pacha himself could yet answer. One thing may be confidently asserted already—that if the inauguration passes off satisfactorily, the Suez Canal will be indisputably open for any amount of traffic. It is not at present known what strangers of distinction will be present. Her Majesty the Empress of the French will undoubtedly be ; so will the Emperor of Austria, and the Crown Prince of Prussia. England will be represented by Mr. Elliot, the Ambassador at Constantinople. All these are expected to be at Port Said by the 15th or 16th. And besides these, there will come an immense multitude from every country in the West, apparently there will not be many from the East. Such as are *invités* of the Viceroy, of whom I have the good fortune to be one, will no doubt be well looked after; but those who are not will certainly be made acquainted with sorrows. Already the residents in the reserved Cairo hotels have ‘notice to quit,’ all available accommo-

dation having been engaged months ago by His Highness. As it is, those who are not the Viceroy's guests are paying a pound a day for a corner in a triple-bedded room, with nothing found for them, and the greatest difficulty in finding anything for themselves. Cairo is crowded, and the extraordinary variety of costumes—chiefly noticeable in the head attire—at once tells that there has been a mighty inroad of foreigners. Moreover the numbers that seek admission to the hotels in vain afford confirmation of the fact. One would not have looked for Swedes here ; but here they are. A fine steam frigate has been sent to Alexandria, that among the multitude of uniforms soon to be grouped together at Port Said, those of the Scandinavian Navy may not be wanting. Such is the world-wide interest felt in the consummation of the work which has been in progress for fifteen years, and such the political and commercial importance attaching thereto.

The whole country—that is to say Alexandria, Port Said, Cairo, Ismailia, and Suez—is the scene of a vast pic-nic, except, of course, to those who have to prepare for the occasion that has caused this peaceful invasion. *These* have no holiday of it. Almost every one who has come to the country accredited in any way has received from Nubar Pacha, the Prime Minister, an invitation as the Viceroy's guest. And the cry is—'Still they come.' The wording of that invitation may possess some interest, so I give it here :—

"MONSIEUR,—Le Canal de Suez doit s'ouvrir le 17 Novembre. Cette œuvre, exécuté au milieu du tant de difficultés matérielles, est de nature à intéresser tout esprit éclairé, à ce titre Son Altesse le Khedive serait heureux, Monsieur, de vous voir assister à l'inauguration du Canal, et m'a chargé de vous y inviter de sa part.

"Veuillez, Monsieur, agréer l'expression de ma haute considération.

N. NUBAR."

I should fill a page or two with most uninteresting matter were I to detail to what sorts and conditions of men these invi-

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tations have been accorded. The great majority are Frenchmen, every second man of whom has ribbon or a distinguishing button in his coat; frequently, indeed, a multiplicity of ribbons perplexes the enquiring mind. But a little judicious management will extract from almost any Continentalist a full, true, and particular account of the circumstances under which he was decorated, his own feelings at the moment and when he recalls it, likewise the unmeasured pride of 'Madame his wife'—pride never more unmistakeably manifested than when some one, 'just as you are now doing, Monsieur,' shews that in her husband he recognises 'somebody.' Having therefore selected incomparably the most *distingué* looking of a large group of *decorés* after breakfast at the Hotel d'Orient, and expressed to him my appreciation of his undoubted, though unknown, worth and distinction, I proceeded to get from him the *raison d'être* for all these ribbons. "Well, this you see," said he, "is the Order of the

“Siamese Elephant; this is the Lamb of
“Madagascar; and this is the Medjidie
“which I received the other day, in con-
“sideration of my having received the other
“two.” I was dis-illusioned; not so the happy
possessor of the Orders in question; he never
in his life enjoyed his cigarette more than
he did at that moment.

CHAPTER III.

A STROLL IN THE CHOUBRA AVENUE.

LIKE every other city, Cairo has its fashionable quarter. That quarter is Eusbekkieh. There all the good hotels are situated—Shepherd's, the Hotel d'Orient, the Hotel Abbat, the new Oriental Hotel, and a heap of others. There too are the mansions of the wealthy, the various consulates, the theatres, the *cafés*, and other centres of attraction. Eusbekkieh, as indeed the whole of Cairo, has been Hausmanised, and is rapidly undergoing a further process of Hausmanisation. The buildings are new and handsome, the streets wide, well-kept, well-watered, and well-shaded by magnificent trees. In this quarter the beauty and fashion of Cairo take their evening drive or promenade, with most undeviating punctuality. To one whose home has been in the Far East for years before, the display in and around this Square every

evening possesses attractions which the majority, coming from the capitals of Europe, know nothing of. The Indian band-stands cannot compare with this Cairo rendezvous. It seems so much like Home again, to see ladies, fashionably attired and delicately nurtured, promenading in twos and threes after the heat of the day is over, and when the declining afternoon sun casts a mellowed light, a softened Oriental glow, over the city. Those healthy complexions and that elastic springy step are unseen in India, whose treacherous, enervating climate plays sad havoc with the rosy cheeks and once vigorous frames of Europeans. The climate of Egypt, on the other hand, is such as to cherish both. People say that the climate at present is not what it usually is at this season; they fancy it is too hot by day, and just a shade too raw by night. I have tried it at all hours of the twenty-four, and can assert that they who thus carp at it are hard to please. What more at any rate, could an

old Indian desire ? A couple of days or so sets the blood flowing through his viens with a healthy glow so different from the feverish sensation with which he is mostly accustomed in the Land of the Sun ; he feels as buoyant and vigorous as he remembers, like a dream, to have felt years ago upon the Cliffs of Dover. Morning and evening are cool, to me cold, but what prevents that I should take the requisite exercise to maintain the proper degree of heat ? Besides, are there not other artificial means of increasing caloric ? What more delicious in circumstances like these than a glass of good punch, mixed by fair fingers, and first tasted probably enough by dainty and inviting lips ? Such is the established order of things at that abode of bliss, the Café d'Orient, where the fair Bertha holds court every evening, and leads off the cotillon on Saturdays.

But let us leave the Café now, probably we shall return later in the evening. Meanwhile we must off to the Choubra Road.

From the Eusbekkieh Square, all drive to Choubra. And a more delightful drive it would be difficult to find. There is not much of natural beauty about it—further than fine, handsome, regular Nile willows on either side, arching and interlacing their boughs overhead. Yet everybody admires it, and everybody frequents it. Nor is it only a fine drive; it possesses other attractions. Who are those charming embodiments of grace and beauty that have just been whirled past in the well-appointed barouche, with the high-stepping English horses? These are none other than the fairies whom you so much admired last night at the Opera. See, here are the others in quick succession and in equally grand form, charming prima donnas, bewitching ballerinas, graceful danseuses, &c., by the score—ladies with many rings, but none of them the plain gold one. And how killing their attire! It is vain to attempt describing the impossible—those pearl grey satins,

casques of pink, and boots apparently made out of rose leaves. Then those cascades of ringlets or drifts of glossy locks! Who does not watch every night for 'the two in scarlet,' that he may again by looks, if not by words, worship so much loveliness. They hunt in couples—the two in black, the two in scarlet, the claret-coloured velvets, &c., each surpassing the other in loveliness, and making the heart weary with its enjoyment. Many a Turk, I am sure, has proposed to the entire flock; many a Christian has made his selection, and though, in no wise disappointed therewith, but the contrary, often doubted the correctness of his choice. All these were not in Egypt two months ago; but His Highness the Viceroy knew that, with such an inroad of people of the masculine gender, the land would be all the merrier were a fair proportion of the fair ones of Italy and France intermingled. So a splendid Operatic Company has been engaged, a splendid Opera House built; a Theatrical Troupe has also

been summoned from the Continent ; and, in addition, the best Circus that ever travelled, fifty horses, from Belgium, and a hundred and fifty artistes. The members of these various Companies are well provided for by His Highness ; they live as his guests, the ladies having their rooms in the best hotels. Next door to the room assigned to my friend Captain S—— and myself at the Hotel d'Orient, two charming little ladies have been located, whose merry chatter, which is seldom still, and the rustle of whose dresses, as they flit about inside, are not conducive to progress in newspaper correspondence. At the same time, good Monsieur Fortuné, best of Maitres d'Hotel, don't think we would have our fair companions moved elsewhere. I fear we should sadly miss them ; to hear them shout for the garçon in the morning, stamp their *tres petits pieds*, and clap their tiny hands to hasten his steps ; and then to go and fetch the dilatory attendant when these calls failed in their object—

all that possesses a kind of novelty of which one feels the pleasant effects during the whole of the day, and of which some are said to experience benefit after day's decline. Such things may be: and why should people not be happy if they can? There is great latitude allowed in all domestic and personal matters under the genial and enlightened Ismael Pacha—whom God preserve. Life here is sometimes arduous, fast of pace, and wide of range; but people like it, and it seems to agree with them.

And now, let us leave this pleasant lounge for the present; after dinner, and when *café noir* shall have somewhat bridled the vivacity of the Viceroy's champagne, we may, escorted by Habesh, if need be, stroll round the other side of the square, and drop in to the *Café d'Orient*, to hear the singing and admire the Harper.

CHAPTER IV.

A QUIET EVENING IN CAIRO.

DINNER over, and a cheroot enjoyed in the quadrangle of the Hotel, where it is the custom to promenade for a quarter of an hour or so before dispersing, the next point for consideration is, wherewithal shall we amuse ourselves during the evening. The chief places of amusement are reserved for the Viceroy's guests, so let us don "*le frac et cravat blanche, qui sont de rigueur*," and make the round of all in succession. Of this plan Habesh, who was by, highly approved, and the matter was settled. First we went to the Opera ; but before taking our places in the box assigned to us, a serio-comic incident occurred that may be worthy of record. The Grand Opera House has a multiplicity of doors ; and one of these is very properly reserved for the ladies of the

Harem. Of this fact, however, neither Habesh nor any of us were at the time aware ; so, seeing nothing to let or hinder us, in we went, and I ran briskly up stairs. The others, however, were stopped by the eunuchs, whose duty it was to have warned us before. They were pounced upon in the most unceremonious manner, and hustled roughly towards the door. S——, of all men, was the man not to take that sort of treatment pleasantly ; heedless of numbers and of words alike, he hit out with vigour, and the most forward of the Nubian eunuchs—a great fat fellow, gorgeously clad—rolled down stairs. This had a perceptible effect upon the others, who, while they continued to speak with considerable warmth and to gesticulate wildly, kept their hands off. Gradually it dawned upon us that we were in the way of temptation, to say the least of it, and that the eunuchs' consternation could be accounted for. So, depriving the fair ladies of what would to them doubtless have been a pleasant surprise, we

left, much to the comfort of our mutilated brethren. For this *rencontre* we could not hold ourselves responsible ; nor, at the same time, could we blame the keepers of the Viceroy's treasures for feeling somewhat perturbed by our unexpected presence amongst them. Had a breath of scandal been set afloat in the Harem by any jealous Sultana, somebody would to a certainty have been bow-strung for that half-hour's work.

From the Opera, we went to the Theatre ; stayed to cheer the Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein—not the Schneider unfortunately ; and peeped in at the Circus, just in time to see the *tableau vivant*, than which we had never beheld anything so good of the kind—*i. e.* so *prononcé*. Lustful Turks and *connoisseurs* generally pronounced it *parfait*, with a depth of expression that bespoke intense feeling on their part, and almost begot pity for them in the minds of their more cold and less impressionable neighbours.

It was now wearing late, and those

from the East of Suez began to feel it chilly. Some, indeed, buttoned their overcoats up to the chin, and shivered after all. Where, then, could they go so wisely as to the *cafés*? Bed was not to be thought of for hours, and among the *cafés* none could compare with the Café d'Orient, the abode of Bertha. Now Bertha is a young lady of character, bright, sparkling even, intensely passionate for good or evil, dressed in rose-coloured silk *ruched* to death, but not unbecoming. Everybody liked Bertha ; some, they say, were led captive by her at her will. She was a person whose feelings were not to be tampered with. Woe betide the faithless amoroso who, having once sworn allegiance to her, let his eyes wander after other gods. Her Italian blood was up, and, heedless if the whole world was looking on, she had her revenge then and there.

“ She rights such wrong where it is given,

“ If it were in the Court of Heaven.”

Lightly, indeed, did he escape, who merely

had a cup of coffee about him, a bowl of punch in his face, or the bouquet he had given her stamped under foot in rage. I have seen one whose infidelity went no further than a smile and a waltze with another, ruthlessly tripped up, and have his head cracked on the marble floor, while from her sweet Italian tongue flowed a perfect torrent of words, musical enough, but terrible withal. Yet, with all her "pretty ways," Bertha was a little lady the like of whom one seldom meets in a casino. And her punch was unexceptionable. There was in the Orchestra a handsome girl—the harp-player previously referred to. She was a source of great care and anxiety to Bertha, for that she was very beautiful, and amiable as well. It grieved Bertha to see Marie shew any inclination to be giddy, or to encourage attentions and compliments from young men. Marie seemed to understand this, and, woman-like, encouraged these attentions all the more, a course of the procedure

which, it must be admitted, was not creditable to her sisterly feeling or her good taste.

All this may appear very frivolous, if not decidedly wrong. It is to me only as a long dream now ; and one likes to recall such old dreams. Yea, often when Cairo and its amusements are farthest from my thoughts, the notes of a song I heard a little lady sing in another *café* in Eusbekkieh come ringing in my ears, as clearly and as affectingly as that night I heard it. That, I am sure, was real music. The song was in German, and I understood not a word of it ; I had never heard the air before, nor can I even whistle it now ; but I shall never forget it ; and a stave of it borne on the air often wafts me back to Cairo again.

CHAPTER V.

HABESH.

Who is Habesh ? some one may not unnaturally ask. Habesh, then, is a very excellent Arab, well known in Cairo ; even the donkey boys admit that he is “a very proper fellow.” Habesh is always ready to do any little job for you in the way of dragoman, guide, or fac-totum ; and a better is not to be found in Cairo. We met first in Abyssinia, and he went as virtually my servant all the way to Magdala. I learned to appreciate him there ; though I never expected to meet the honest fellow again, I had not forgotten him. It was, therefore, a surprise for me, on driving from the station to the hotel, to find a great lumbering Arab running full speed alongside of the carriage, grinning from ear to ear, his whole face aglow with delight, shouting—“How do

you do Mr. Shebherd !;" and great was my delight on recognising my old friend Habesh. He had done work for me many a day under trying circumstances, and I was quite pleased to have him again under happier auspices. We struck a bargain at once, Habesh took my belongings and those of my friend "the Cabtain" (as in his broken English he called him) up to the room allotted us ; and proceeded at once to the square to proclaim the peculiar excellences and virtues of "Mr. Shebherd." The result of this was good so far; "Mr. Shebherd" never had any difficulty in getting a carriage or a donkey when he wanted one; indeed he was generally mobbed to the neglect of other people. Shoe blacks also picked up his name, and insisted on brushing his boots whether he would or no. Yes, Habesh was "a very proper fellow" in the estimation of the donkey boys. The fact is he could have licked any half-dozen of them with ease; for he was of immense stature.

To "the Cabtain" and myself he was of immense service. He aided us with advice on every point; he saw us to bed, and roused us in the morning—so be that our young friends the ballerinas had not done so before his arrival. Habesh had much to tell me, and much to ask. He had been back to Abyssinia with Mr. Powell, and related the whole of the affecting story.

Mr. Powell went to Abyssinia on a mission which in these days seldom has to be undertaken by any one—the avenging of the death of his nearest relatives, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." While this was the chief object of his mission, Mr. Powell had another and perhaps more trying and affecting object in view: he desired, if possible, to carry from the land where they lay unburied the bones of his brother and sister, and to lay them in the family tomb among the Welsh mountains. And he accomplished both of these objects. Starting from Mussowah, Mr. Powell travelled by way

of Ailaat, Asmara, and Doondoo to Adowa, bearing such letters to Prince Kassa as would be likely to secure that Prince's co-operation. He also carried most valuable presents on his own account. The Prince, who had already taken measures to avenge the death of one whom he regarded as his friend, gave Mr. Powell six hundred men, properly officered and equipped. This force set out in quest of the murderers, and came upon them in due course. About the identity of the actual murderer there could be no doubt ; for Mrs. Powell, alarmed and desperate as she must have been under the circumstances, had with her husband's revolver lodged a bullet securely in the ruffian's wrist. The murderer having been secured, as well as his family, a terrible but just vengeance was taken. His family—eight persons in all—were put to death before his eyes and those of Mr. Powell; and he, the actual perpetrator of the crime, was taken prisoner to Kassa at Adowa, and there shot in the pre-

sence of that Prince and Mr. Powell. The bones of Mr. and Mrs. Powell and their little child were found bleached but uninjured ; and were wrapped in a cloth and laid side by side in the same box, for conveyance to their vault at home. And, as Habesh said :—" They were very light ; I gathered " them all myself while Mr. Powell wept " much ; for there had been much rain, and " we heard plenty jackals every night."

CHAPTER VI.

FROM CAIRO TO ALEXANDRIA.

Cairo, November 11.

At last preparations for the opening day begin to assume some definite shape. Day after day and night after night, officials of every degree—Effendis, Beys, and Pachas—have been hard at work, trying to bring the in-harmonious mass into a harmonious whole. And now they seem to have succeeded to such an extent as to have a plan of some sort matured ; for *les invités* from Suez, Ismailia, Cairo, and Alexandria all have their faces turned towards Port-Said. Daily the Masters of Ceremonies despatch batches of guests—some by one route, some by another, but all towards the same ultimate destination. Go to the station at Cairo, and see the train start. It consists of some twelve to twenty carriages, with half-a-

dozen trucks for luggage, and of these carriages all but one or two have been reserved for His Highness the Khedive. At every other station along the line there is a free table, where the guests have but to declare themselves and 'refresh' thereafter to any extent. Twice a day detachments proceed to Alexandria and Ismailia from Cairo. Those proceeding to Alexandria rest a night there, and in the morning embark for Port-Said in the steamers of the Azizieh Company. Those who elect to travel by way of Ismailia, have to risk the Canal in boats ; but all are contemplated to reach Port-Said by the 15th instant, at the latest.

Among the great ones of the earth whose destination at present is Port-Said are Her Majesty the Empress of the French, the Emperor of Austria, the Crown Prince of Prussia, the Prince and Princess Henry of Holland, Prince Louis of Hesse, Prince Oscar of Sweden, Mr. Elliot, English Ambassador at Constantinople, a Grand Duke of Russia, &c.

The Empress Eugenie reaches Cairo to-morrow from her excursion up the Nile, and on the 13th goes on to Alexandria, there to embark in her own yacht, and lead the way to Port-Said. At Port-Said, on the 16th, a religious ceremonial is to be observed, and some sort of dedication performed. On the 17th the procession starts, and on the 18th there is to be a grand ball in the new palace at Ismailia, the like of which has never before been seen in the Land of Egypt. The ball over, the steamers go on to Suez, to bathe their hulls in the waters of the Red Sea. Next all hurry back to Cairo, to the ball in honour of the Emperor of Austria on 23rd, and thereafter to follow the bent of their own sweet will.

Of the success of the opening ceremony no one at present entertains serious doubts. But then we are breathing an atmosphere which, if not entirely French, is very deeply Frenchified; and Frenchmen consider it high treason to detract in any way from the

grand success which in their estimation has been already achieved. I heard a French naval officer the other day offer to bet fifty thousand francs that all the fleet of steamers—great and small—will pass safely through on the opening days. This, considering many ways in which *contretemps* may occur, and the block that even one vessel in grief will certainly occasion, was very plucky, to say the least of it.

The one point on which those interested in the Canal are sore is the coldness, real or fancied, manifested by England. It is vain to tell them that should the Canal prove a world's highway the chief source of its wealth must and assuredly will come from English pockets or be contributed by English vessels, and that at this present moment an ocean steamer is loading in Bombay to make the passage. All this they admit, but attach no importance to. England, they say, has all along "trembled for her colonies of St. Helena and Ascension ;"

and the enunciation of this amusing article of faith called forth applauding murmurs from the guests at the table d'hôte at the Hotel d'Orient the other day ! Every one evidently considered the speaker an admirably shrewd fellow—much more so than his comparatively prosy compatriot who ventured to suggest that it was not so much for St. Helena and Ascension that England trembled, as for her Liverpool bottoms and the traders round the Cape.

CHAPTER VII.

AT ALEXANDRIA.

Alexandria, November 13.

SPECIAL trains have to-day been pouring their hundreds into Alexandria, and how everybody has been housed is a question few can answer. All the hotels are full, and the same reply is given to each new applicant for admission and refreshment—"Every corner is occupied, and the Viceroy's guests have eaten everything." This latter assertion is probably not strictly true; but the fact is, the hotel proprietors are doing so well with their £2-8 a day for every guest quartered upon them, that strangers at odd moments are not thought worth their attention. Passengers homeward or outward-bound find the Egypt of to-day in the hands of the enemy—there is no room for them in the inns. Nor in Alexandria to-day is there

room for even the guests. Those from Europe have filled the hotels, and all from the Suez side have to rest and be thankful with very second-rate accommodation or none. To get away from Cairo was no easy matter. Broad shoulders did more to aid in that respect than even a letter from Nubar Pacha himself would have done. Having, however, determined to force my way to Alexandria to-day, I refused to see any difficulty. My companion and myself—though seldom, as it happened, quite of the same mind on any subject—were perfectly agreed upon this, that it was high time we were out of Cairo. Moreover, a lady was proceeding under our escort, so that we felt a due weight of responsibility which, instead of crushing us wholly, nerved us for any contingency. The journey did seem long, notwithstanding the special nature of the train, the dust was dreadful, and the mid-day heat oppressive.

On reaching Alexandria, matters did not

look altogether cheering. The officials charged with the care of the Viceroy's guests, hard as they work, and courteous and untiring as they are, have been at last overcome by sheer numbers. They know not what to do with the fresh arrivals. A happy idea has come to their rescue—they send them on board ship at once ; and our batch was the first to go. Being afflicted on emergencies with what my friends term *trop de zèle*, I succeeded before these arrangements were made known, in getting out of the station, baggage and all, and was galloping as hard as a pair of horses could take me to the Square, that I might secure rooms for myself and friends, if any were to be had. Not one at the Hotel d'Europe, not one at the Hotel Abbat, not one at the P. and O. Hotel. Would they allow me to appropriate a stair-landing till perchance a vacancy should occur? To get rid of my persistency, and that of the invaluable "Cabtain" who accompanied, a vacancy was sought for, and

found. Now I felt happy, and went back to the station to find the lady who had put herself under our care. No lady was there, and none knew whither she had gone. Fortunately I had an introduction to Colucci Bey, the Chief of the Municipality of Alexandria, and Director of Ceremonies. To him I went, and after a time saw the gentleman—as courteous and fine a man as Italy ever produced. Unceremoniously as I had thrust myself upon him, and dusty and travel-stained as I was, he insisted on my partaking of his hospitality, which was far from unacceptable. Pleasant too, and refreshing, was the conversation I had with the young ladies, his daughters, who had received a perfect English education, and helped out their father and me when my imperfect Italian failed to make us completely understand the various topics under discussion. From Colucci Bey I learned that my party had been conveyed on board the *Fayoum*. Thither, therefore, I proceeded ; but found

that they had gone on board the *Mas'r* (or *Cairo*), another vessel of the Viceroy's about to leave for Port-Said. There I found them. Learning that this vessel was to convey to the scene of action the Consuls, Vice-Consuls and their suites, I concluded that was the vessel for a Special Correspondent to be on. Having returned ashore, I conveyed my effects thither, and installed myself in the cabin allotted to me, where I shall remain till I leave her at Port-Said.

The *Mas'r* is, without any exception, the finest vessel in which I have ever set foot. She is a floating palace, and everything on board, except probably the drill and discipline, is of the finest. It is said that the *Mas'r* is to make the tour of the Canal ; but I doubt that. If she does, and passes safely through, M. Lesseps and his supporters may well, with proud confidence, ask the world to judge as to the result of their labours. The Captain is not on board, having gone to dine with the Empress, whose yacht is at

anchor about a hundred yards to seaward, so no one is able to tell me the tonnage of the vessel ; but this I may give as some guide, the P. and O. *Delta*, just on the other side of us, looks small beside this vessel. She must be nearly 4,000 tons. Her fittings are perfection itself, and the servants are, under the direction of Pietro, (who knows London Hotels well,) most attentive and obliging.

To-morrow morning, weather permitting, and Eugenie willing, there will be quite a stampede of vessels to Port-Said. Unless plans are changed during the night or early morning, Her Imperial Majesty's yacht will lead the way before mid-day, and will be followed by a whole fleet of vessels, including the P. and O. *Delta*, three of the *Azizieh*, and not improbably by the English squadron of seven ships-of-war, now lying out in the Bay. Yesterday, three fine frigates sailed for Port-Said, an Austrian, a Swedish, and a Russian. These will hardly

yet venture into the Canal ; but their presence at the opening will add greatly to the *eclat* of the occasion, and will, moreover, please mightily that “grand nation” which regards the present festivities as a tribute to its genius and general pre-eminence. And why should they not be thus gratified if they like it ? The gratification will hurt nobody —nobody at any rate who will be privileged to take part in next week’s *fêtes*. For this reason it is to be hoped that the English squadron now in the Bay will perform their part on Monday next, along with the representatives of other nations’ maritime and naval interests. The Italian squadron, accompanying the Duke and Duchess of Aosta, was here a week ago, with the intention of staying for the inauguration, but the recent illness of the King of Italy led to the young Duke’s recall, and it is considered doubtful, notwithstanding His Majesty’s convalescence, whether His Royal Highness will return.

To the list of festivities I gave in my last

letter must now be added a grand ball at Alexandria, to be given by the Austrian colony here in honour of their Emperor. *Modistes* and fashionable people generally look forward to it with most pleasant anticipations. The same cause for anxiety does not exist with regard to this ball as forces itself upon thoughtful people with regard to the Ismailia one. People ask, where are the ladies to come from? As if the Viceroy had not foreseen and provided against that difficulty! Are there not plenty of *divas* and *danseuses* in Cairo, and what more easy than to run a special train or two if need be, to convey them to Ismailia on that evening? Seeing that these fashionable ladies ride daily in the Viceroy's carriages, and have life in Egypt made pleasant for them in so many other ways, how can it be imagined for a moment that their presence could be forgotten on such a momentous occasion? Besides these, there are not a few ladies among His Highness's guests. So those who have come

provided with evening dress or other full uniform need entertain no great apprehension regarding the disposal of their time on the ball nights.

From the Canal itself, not the breath of a rumour reaches Alexandria. Everybody knows nothing, but believes a great deal. Even the Egyptian papers, to which one naturally looks for some little information on the subject, preserve a studied silence. Where a good *résumé* of passing events ought to be, we find only a sparkling critique of last night's performance at the Opera or the Theatre Comique.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALEXANDRIA TO PORT-SAID.

Port-Said, November 16.

ON the morning of the 14th, we all expected to steam out from Alexandria for Port-Said, headed by Her Majesty the Empress of the French. But still we remained fast, and Her Majesty was on a visit to the Viceroy. On all sides vessels had steam up, ready to start ; just over against us the P. & O. *Delta* was making a great a-do because she could not yet sail out in distinguished company. There were various reasons assigned for the delay of the *Mas'r*. One reason was that my Lord Houghton (R. Monckton Mills that was) had not got the precise quality of sherry on board that he liked, wherefore our departure had to be delayed till fresh supplies could be procured from shore. His Lordship strenuously denied the imputation, but

at the same time added that he liked wines of superior quality, and might perhaps grumble if these could not be had. Others again said, and with some reason, that the *Mas'r*, being, as I have stated, a vessel of 4,000 tons, could not venture to cross the bar of Alexandria while there was a heavy swell on. This I believe to have been the reason of our delay, for it was indeed blowing great guns outside. At any rate, we had the mortification of seeing first one vessel and then another steam out past us, their crews and passengers cheering lustily as they went. First went the *Europe*, a fine vessel of the Messageries Imperiales, which dipped her ensign thrice to the *Mas'r*, the latter being the flag-ship of His Highness the Viceroy. Then followed the Viceroy's ship the *Fayoum*, having a distinguished party on board, among whom I might name several well-known Bombay personages. She too saluted, and went on her way across the bar rejoicing. The *Fayoum* is a splendid paddle-

steamer of 2,000 tons, in which the Viceroy's harem used to be transported every summer to the Bosphorus, in the days when goodwill reigned between the Khedive and his Suzerain. The *Delta*, too, got steam up, and hoisted her blue peter, snorting audibly ; but she did not go ; she banked her fires and waited for the morrow. All this time the Captain of the *Mas'r*—an excellent seaman, and one who did not want to land the finest vessel in Alexandria on a sand bank for the gratification of anybody—moved about on board, a disconsolate man. He gave orders to have steam up by four o'clock next morning, fired a few salvos of rockets, ordered his band—a very good one too—to play the Lancers, and retired to rest.

Next morning, according to instructions, steam was up, and all was ready for a start. Breakfast comfortably over, the *Mas'r* slipped her cable, and crossed the bar about ten o'clock. There was a heavy swell on even then ; but she rose and fell to every wave

with the utmost ease and grace. There was none of that angularity of motion which distinguishes some vessels on such occasions; so few felt depressed in spirits except mercurial Frenchmen and a German or two. These, the bar once crossed and the vessel in smooth water, roused themselves sufficiently to look back on the dangers they had passed, and to exclaim with something approaching to fervour—" *Ah c'est un tempeste terrible !*" These men should cross the Indian Ocean in the height of the monsoon; they might then make such an exclamation with more of truth. In due course the *Mas'r* reached Port-Said, having made a good run of it. Not so good, however, as Her Imperial Majesty's *L'Aigle*; for we left that yacht riding quietly at anchor in Alexandria harbour, and found her this morning dancing merrily in front of us off Port-Said. When day dawned, all glasses were directed forward, and the first thing that was seen was the gay little vessel carrying the gold

spangled tricolor which all knew so well. Away, also, to the rear, smoke could be descried, and soon the *Delta* appeared, carrying the English ensign at the stern, with the Empress's flag gallantly run up at the main. After an hour's hard run *L'Aigle* was overhauled, for she was graciously laying-to till everything should be ready for her progress up the Canal mouth to the anchorage allotted to her. She knew that she had to run the gauntlet of five fleets, and wished herself as well as them to be prepared for the ordeal. Ahead of *L'Aigle* might be descried a forest of masts, and there was no difference of opinion but that there lay a fine squadron of men-of-war. A little farther and these were discovered to be English, outside of them being two gigantic Austrian iron-clads, which for some reason best known to themselves were constantly enveloped in powder smoke. Inside of the British line lay a Russian frigate and a Danish vessel. In line with these, the *Mas'r*,

according to instructions, took up her position, and completed the second line of heavy-armed warriors. Beyond, inside the entrance of the Canal, is a perfect wood of trees, for there lie the Swedish, French, Danish, and Dutch fleets besides a very large number of merchant steamers of various nations.

It may here be added, as another writer has observed, that whatever may be the defects of Port-Said as a harbour, it is shown that it can afford safe anchorage for some hundred vessels, varying from between five hundred to two thousand five hundred tons in burden. It is worthy of note, also, that almost all these vessels made good their entrance during one of the stiffest gales you encounter in the waters of the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE EMPRESS.

Port-Said, November 16.

LET us now change our ground a little, and look back. We left Her Majesty's yacht laying-to off the harbour, till every vessel in the offing should be in position. Now we may see her with steam up, standing straight in for Port-Said. This does not escape the notice of Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, and presently the whole British squadron are thundering forth their welcome. The effect was inexpressibly grand. They are five fine vessels, the *Lord Warden*, *Royal Oak*, *Caledonia*, *Prince Consort*, and *Bellerophon*, and they were in splendid line. Nothing during the whole day was so touching and grand as when, at a given signal, every yard was manned, and ringing cheers burst forth from every rigging, carry-

ing *vivas* for the Empress Eugenie. Her Majesty heard them, and hard-a-port went her helm that she might steam right through the fleet, and so express her acknowledgments. The cheering at this moment from the whole British line was perfectly deafening ; and hardly had it subsided when the Russian took up the theme, followed by the *Mas'r*, on behalf of the Viceroy of Egypt. All this time Her Majesty was on the verandah of her yacht—for it has a verandah—evidently enjoying the warlike and festive scene around her. Ten minutes more steaming and *L'Aigle* was inside the harbour, fairly among the shipping, French, Russian, Austrian, Dutch, and Spanish in rows on either side of the fairway. Then arose a mighty cloud of light-coloured smoke, in the midst of which lightning flashes from the mouths of hundreds of cannon might be observed, while the thunder of the salute from two hundred cannon mouths was grand beyond description. It was such a salute as

one only hears once in a life-time, and such a salute as even Her Majesty had never received before, nor can ever expect to receive again. In the midst of it all, *L'Aigle* steamed up to her anchorage ; and when the smoke cleared away, every one of the hundred ships in the harbour was seen to be a complete blaze of flags.

After this commenced a series of salutations and compliments which it is simply impossible to describe. An attempt to take accurate notes ignominiously failed. First the Austrian iron-clads saluted the English ; then the English returned the salute. The English saluted the Austrian ; and the Austrian acknowledged the compliment. Similar combinations and permutations took place between these and the other powers—French, Prussian, Russian, Swedish, Danish, Turkish, &c., and violent cannonading on all sides has been the order of the day. Besides cannonading on this account, the movements of Royal personages have been similarly noised

abroad ; so that our atmosphere, if it has been redolent of joy and festivity, has also been redolent of villainous saltpetre.

Now, before proceeding ashore to give a short outline of the proceedings in Port-Said itself, and some description of the appearance that town presents, I will make one or two observations regarding our fellow voyagers from Alexandria, which may be of some interest. Among the illustrious visitors from England are Lord Dudley, Lord Houghton, Sir Frederick Arrow, Hon'ble Thomas Bruce, Messrs. Edwards, M.P. for Weymouth, Eaton for Coventry, Gregory for Galway, Vivian for Glamorganshire, the Hon'ble Mr. Lyttleton, &c., &c. Lord Dudley did not travel to Port-Said in a vessel of the Viceroy's, as he judged, and very rightly so, that no proper accommodation had been provided for him there ; so, both to secure a more pleasant voyage, and to give mild expression to his dissatisfaction with the treatment he has received, he proceeded by the P. & O.

Delta instead. After all that Lord Dudley did for the Viceroy in England, it was naturally supposed that His Lordship would meet with something approaching equal attention in Egypt. But no: with the best and most liberal intentions in the world, His Highness and his officials, while they do their utmost, find it beyond their power to do otherwise than treat all guests pretty much alike. Moreover in effecting even this, very great confusion ensues ; though under present circumstances, it would be ungrateful to grumble. Lord Houghton has been greatly pained during the voyage—not solely on account of the slackness of the waiters, however ; and he once threatened to show his displeasure by refusing to appear at the *fêtes* in any other attire than that of a private gentleman. But his better feelings overcame him ; and he broke out in the scarlet and silver of a deputy-lieutenant. The Hon'ble Thomas Bruce is Chairman of the Ottoman Bank, and, as brother of the present Earl of

Elgin and of Sir Frederick Bruce, must be a son of a late Governor-General of India. Sir Frederick Arrow is the working member and representative of Trinity House. Mr. Hawkshaw, the eminent engineer, who pronounced a favourable opinion on the Canal project in 1863, is also on board the *Mas'r*. I say on board the *Mas'r*, though to-morrow morning early we are all to be transferred to some other vessel, as one of 4,000 tons is considered too ponderous for the opening trip. Yet up to five o'clock this afternoon, M. Lesseps was determined that the *Mas'r* should go to Ismailia, and nothing but the strongest representations have led him to sanction our transfer to some vessel of lighter draught.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONY.

Port-Said, November 16.

Now let us leave the *Mas'r* at the extreme entrance and proceed leisurely up the Canal towards the landing place, in time for the religious ceremony that is to declare the work so far completed, and at which the blessing of Heaven is to be invoked upon it. The chief thing that strikes the eye is the variety and grandeur of the ships-of-war lying on either side, their cold eyes looking passionlessly down upon you as you pass. On the right, in order, are Austrian, English, Turkish, English, Russian, Swedish, Prussian, Austrian, Swedish again, and Spanish. On the left are the French frigates, Turks, French again, Danish, and Dutch. In all there must be some thirty vessels of war and fifty merchantmen—a glorious sight at

any time, more particularly when gaily decked in gala attire, and, above all, when, at night, every one is a blaze of light from deck to topmast, every mast, spar, and rope defined by a row of parti-coloured lamps. We reach the landing place, and find a grand triumphal arch erected within fifty yards of it. Before and beyond this arch, to the distance of a mile and a half, is a street lined with soldiers in their best attire ; and on either side are rows of lamps and illuminations which, when the shades of night close over the town, will present a most delightful spectacle. Getting behind a couple of deputy-lieutenants (for a gaudy uniform is specially imposing in Egypt, it seems) we may advance without let or hindrance—nay calling forth expressions of admiration on every side—till we reach the canopy from which their Royal Highnesses and other distinguished persons are to witness and take part in the ceremony. This is along the “Quai Eugenie.” On either

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side, besides the soldiers, are grand displays of flags and banners ; and as these are made of light gauze instead of stuff, they float gaily to the least breath that blows, and are really an effective mode of decoration. At the end of this avenue, on either side of which the reader may imagine crowds of excited and babbling spectators, has been erected a large canopy, raised some twenty feet above the ground ; and in front of this canopy, at a distance of, say, thirty feet, are two kiosks, the one for Roman Catholics, and the other for Mahomedans.

Looking back upon Port-Said from shore, as from sea, it strikes one as a dreary place enough. It is built upon a narrow spit of sand lying between the sea and the lagoon of Menzaleh. The shore, treeless and waterless, offers not one interesting feature. The few patches of green that meet the eye are small gardens, containing stunted trees and shrubs, hardly kept alive by the abundant supply of water which is conveyed to Port-

Said by two lines of iron pipes from the canal of Ismailia, some 45 miles distant, where there is a magnificent steam pump for supplying the line of the canal north of Ismailia. The town, which of late years has much increased, contains but few good houses ; the streets are unpaved, and still deep with loose sand. Much remains to be done, still it is remarkable how much has been effected by one man's energy in this inhospitable wilderness. The population of the town may amount to some 8,000, a large proportion of them being Greeks. It is only of late that an Egyptian Custom-house has been established here, or a native police introduced ; and, as usual in these regions, a complete state of lawlessness generally prevails, murders and robberies being of constant occurrence. Just before the opening of the Canal, a large number of suspicious characters were expelled from the town by the Egyptian police. During the last four years the sea has retired considerably,

the silt brought down by the Nile being carried by the easterly current and deposited in the angle between the jetty and the beach line. This was one of the many difficulties predicted. On the land thus gained, a handsome lighthouse has been built, with a flashing electric light. Crowds of well-dressed people, excursionists and others, filled the cafés. A sunny sky above, the graceful forms of the shipping, and the brilliant colours all around; the sharp echo of constant salutes; the ringing cheers as one or other of the grand personages present passed by—all formed a scene of surpassing interest.

The hour appointed for the ceremony was 3 P. M. Long before that time, however, a large but most orderly crowd had assembled in front of the three pavilions. The largest pavilion, which was tastefully decorated, and covered with red drapery and gilding, was destined for the crowned heads, for the Khedive, and their respective

suites, for the ambassadors, consuls general, and other nobles. To these the central part was assigned; the division on the right was for the Greek clergy; that on the left for the Coptic, Maronite, Armenian, and other Christian clergy who were present. Amongst the former were several very handsome faces. The Greek ecclesiastical dress, though not so magnificent as the Roman, is still striking; and several of those men, with strongly-marked handsome features, full and long beards, the pastoral staff borne before them, and the episcopal signet on their hands, formed not the least interesting part of the scene. Of the other two pavilions in front, that on the west decorated with green, was destined for the heads of the Mahommedan faith who were to take part in the ceremony; while that on the east, in blue drapery, with the cross in white, was for the Latin clergy; who, headed by the Archbishop of Alexandria, and habited in splendid robes, were to celebrate mass in the Roman style.

Now the royal personages have taken up the places assigned to them; let us view the impressive gathering from the front. In the centre stood the Empress of the French, the lovely Eugenie, looking unspeakably charming and beautiful. No one could say he had ever seen her look more so, and that is saying a very great deal. She had on a dress of mauve silk, trimmed with deep flounces of white lace. On Her Majesty's right sat His Highness the Khedive, in Stamboul uniform, and wearing the grand cordons of the Medjidieh and of the Legion of Honour. Next on the right was the Princess Henry of Holland; next Mr. Elliot. On the left of the Empress was the Emperor of Austria, the Kaiser Francis Joseph; he wore his white Austrian Jager uniform, with the cocked hat surmounted by a heavy plume of green feathers. Next to him towered the Crown Prince of Prussia, wearing his cavalry uniform and massive sword, every inch a soldier, as his right hand bro-

ther knows right well. Prince Oscar of Sweden stood next, Prince Louis of Hesse next, and Prince Henry of Holland on the left. Conspicuous in the next row were M. Lesseps, in plain black coat, and Abdel-Kadir, in his plain white burnous and turban. Behind the front row of Royalties were any number of princes, diplomatists, ladies-in-waiting, equerries, and courtiers.

Now let us follow a facile pen through the ceremony itself. "The proceedings commenced with a prayer or address, read in a low voice, from a written paper, by a Mollah, with a green turban, accompanied by half-a-dozen aged Sheiks, who, like their spokesman, seemed ill at ease. Of the foreigners who crowded round the Royal stand, not half-a-dozen probably understood one word of what the Mollah was reading ; and the loud conversation they kept up during the recital of the Mussulman prayer was to some extent excused by the fact that the Khedive chatted with the Empress during

the whole of its delivery. When the Mollah had concluded, a score or more of bearded Greek priests, in gorgeous robes, entered the right-hand kiosk, where an altar had been raised up, with a cross—not a crucifix—in front, and rows of wax candles, and commenced a long sing-song chaunt, varied by endless genuflexions, crossings, and bowings, the chief part in the service being performed by a venerable-looking, grey-haired old man, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Then the ships in the harbour fired off rounds upon rounds of salutes; and when at last the firing was ended, Monsignor Bauer, the Chaplain of the French Imperial Court, stepped forward on the platform as the representative of the Catholic Church. A young, fresh-looking ecclesiastic, with the purple cape and “beret” of a Pontifical Prothonotary, he scarcely looked equal to the duty which had been assigned to him of being the real spokesman of the ministers of religion. But when his clear, rich voice was

once heard ringing forth distinctly and slowly across the shore, no doubt could be entertained as to the wisdom of the choice which had assigned to him the leading part in the ceremonial."

The following is the translation of Monsignor Bauer's eloquent oration :—

"MONSIGNOR MADAME, SIRE,—I may certainly affirm that this work is not only one of the most solemn of the nineteenth century, but also one of the greatest inscribed on the annals of history. On this marvellous shore, wherever we turn our gaze, and in view of this cosmopolite gathering, what subjects for joy in the present and the future—what glorious hopes! Behold there the termination of the task reputed to be impossible. Behold these ships starting forth to unite the East and the West. Even as in the chronology of the past is inscribed the memorable date which revealed a new world, so, in the chronology of the future, the 16th November, 1869, will stand forth in ineffaceable characters. Thus we have two worlds united in one. The splendid East and the marvellous West draw nigh and salute each other. Hail to thee, splendid East, where rises at once the light of the sun and of intelligence! Hail to thee also, O West, which hast fostered this light

and made it the common heritage of all. To-day is the festal day of all humanity.

“The Canal, which seemed to us only made for material riches, will be the highway of light, civilization, and intelligence—the great river which will make of two halves one world and one humanity. I see a boundless horizon where move the highest thoughts and the most glorious destinies of the human race. Manners, habits, language—all will be united in one single family : no more terrestrial divisions ; no more intellectual separations.

“Here let me pay my just and sad tribute to those who have died the victims of this great work, and who repose to-day in tombs without epitaphs. Their names, though not inscribed on marble, will live eternally in the memories of those who witnessed their struggles and their sufferings. But adieu to these mournful reflections, and let us think of the triumphs of the moment.

“MONSIGNOR—The name of your Highness stands forth in our grateful recollection. Receive in the name of all those who have passionately desired this great work—receive by one mouth all their thanks. What you have wisely designed, you have courageously accomplished. Enjoy to-day your glorious success. The East and the West receive you with acclamations. Egypt will owe her splendour to you. Monsignor, allow the voice of a priest to congratulate you upon the change

and progress accomplished in the Land of the Pharaohs. The land of all slavery is become to-day the land of all liberty. Thanks in the name of Christianity, in the name of France, in the name of Europe. Thanks in the name of the human race.

“MADAME—and this is no light affirmation—History will tell all that this marvellous work owes to your cordial sympathy. Here again your heart has beaten in unison with that of France. But there is a man in whom is personified, so to speak, the great work which brings us together on this shore—yesterday so barren, to-day so hospitable. His enthusiastic and generous devotion, his continued labour, his perfect loyalty, his continuous solicitude—in short, everything that goes to constitute the powerful originator, have made of him the greatest glory of the nineteenth century. There is now one name which, without disparagement, we may associate with that of Christopher Columbus: it is that of Ferdinand Lesseps. But besides the triumph, we must not forget to pay a debt of tender recollection to those who have perished in the task—and this will offend no national susceptibilities. All people of the earth have joined in the gigantic work: in it more enemies have been conquered than space, barbarism, and sand of the desert. Let me be allowed, in conclusion, to salute all the illustrious men who honour and delight us with their presence.

"SIRE—Your Apostolic Majesty has given to this stupendous work the testimony of your sympathy. The Adriatic Sea, which forms one portion of your vast empire, has become one water with the Indian Ocean. May the God to whom you have just given testimony of allegiance by kneeling at the tomb of the Saviour of the World, bless you and the people confided to your care.

"To conclude with a sentiment worthy of the occasion, let us, O all ye whom I call brethren, raise our minds before God even to the great mass of humanity; and higher still, let us raise them to the very Divinity who has permitted to men to accomplish this un hoped-for enterprise in the heart of his creation. Oh God, to whom we owe all these wonders, grant that this work, which should be so fruitful in material results, may become for all people a work of progress and civilization, and that it may mark a new era in the history of humanity."

Thereupon the ships of war gave forth their loud "Amen," and the ceremony was over. All afternoon salutes were being exchanged, and bands on every second vessel were playing—"God Save the Queen" and "*Partant pour la Syrie*" being the favourite anthems.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM PORT-SAID TO ISMAILIA.

On board the "Garbieh," November 18.

At length we are fairly in the Suez Canal, indeed by this time some twenty ocean steamers must have reached Ismailia. The precise number of vessels before the *Garbieh* in the procession, I am unable to state ; nor does any one know how many are to follow. Far as the eye and the best binoculars can reach, at a distance from each other of *seemingly* a hundred yards or so, are steamers of a thousand tons and over, following without the least deviation from the correct line. This says a great deal for the handling of those vessels, for nothing would be more easy than to diverge a few feet towards either side, and block the channel for the rest of the day. Yesterday morning at Port-Said, there was some attempt made to

abide by a programme, but that programme was so easily broken through, and such was the temptation to break through it, that at last it came to be disregarded, and every steamer that could slip safely into the fair-way did so, heedless of the maledictions of the Beys and Pachas on shore directing the ceremonies. Captains well knew that if only they could get their noses into the Canal, nothing could take them out again, and they were off for the day. More than one handy vessel stole away in this manner—hence the difficulty of knowing how many have actually preceded us, or how many will follow. For though there were in Port-Said, when the *Garbieh* left, from thirty to forty vessels with their steam up watching for a chance to slip away, they may not all see the joke of proceeding along the Canal only to reach Ismailia after all the festivities are over. Many persons intended to return to Alexandria, and proceed by train to Ismailia, rather than risk being behind the fair by

bringing up the end of the procession. The journey from Port-Said will occupy about six hours, all going well, and hitherto no contretemps of any moment can have occurred, else we had been brought to a standstill before now.

The start yesterday morning was delayed till about three o'clock, in consequence of the *Latif*, one of the Viceroy's steamers, having gone aground in the Canal some twenty miles from Port-Said. The *Latif* had been sent on as a sort of forerunner, to clear the way for Her Majesty, and, being a large vessel that answered her helm very clumsily, took the bank during the night. But she was got off after a few hours, and the way was announced clear. Thereupon *L'Aigle* slipped her cable, and steamed away, which fact was announced by a salute of a hundred and one guns from the French fleet. At no great distance after Her Imperial Majesty, followed the Emperor of Austria, in the *Greif*, a very fine vessel indeed, carrying

the yellow flag of the House of Hapsburg ; and after him other Royal personages in order. Every ten minutes or so, a steamer entered the Canal, and soon the gloomy views that had been entertained in the morning began to give way before brighter anticipations. Such, indeed, was the trouble caused by moving from vessels of 3,000 or 4,000 tons burthen to others of more reasonable draught, and such the general block in and around the harbour, that the belief took fast hold on many minds—Mr. Hawkshaw's among the rest—that the only feasible way of making sure of reaching Ismailia within the space of a month, was by getting hold of a donkey and a bag of ship biscuits.

Up till five o'clock on the afternoon of the 16th, M. Lesseps had determined that the *Mas'r* and other gigantic vessels like her should go through ; but then he wisely listened to representations, and gave his consent to their remaining behind. The rush that

thereon ensued from these large steamers may be imagined, and the crush on board the smaller vessels is something fearful. Much inconvenience is caused as a matter of course ; but the officers on board, from Captain and Commissary downwards, do everything in their power to mitigate it ; and everybody is grateful and satisfied. The scene on board the *Garbieh* last night after dinner was proof positive of that. It is true most had dined under difficulties, for there are exactly three times as many on board as provision had been made for ; but all that seemed only to add to the general amusement. After sunset the *Garbieh* anchored for the night, according to rule, the halting place being Ras-el-Esch, the first station beyond Port-Said. Four hawsers—two fore and two aft—held her fast till day-break, when they were neatly slipped, and we were again under steam, at the rate of at least six knots an hour. But I am anticipating. During dinner the band struck

up "God save the Queen," not meaning anything further by it than simply to give the company a little music. But it was not so regarded by the English present ; for, by one common impulse, and to the consternation of the Continentals on board, all rose, and gave three such cheers as probably Lake Menzaleh never heard before. Then the band, feeling that they had committed themselves, promptly played "*Partant pour la Syrie*," to please the French ; but no such echo was heard among them as the English national anthem had evoked ; they did not even say once "*Vive l'Imperatrice*," and the English lustily did it for them again and again. English though they were, they had gallantry enough to warm up at the call for a demonstration in honour of the charming and graceful lady in whose train they followed. After dinner followed the dance, which was kept up till the ladies on board were fairly tired out and could dance no longer. The dance over, the Egyptian

national anthem was played, and followed by ringing cheers for the Viceroy from all on board ; then followed the English, Italian, French, Swedish, and Russian anthems, the hurrahs of the English, though these English were few in number, completely drowning the feebler cheers of their fellows.

Under way from Ras-el-Esch at day-light, the *Garbieh* passed Kantara, at the extremity of Lake Menzaleh, at 9 o'clock, going at a splendid pace, and closely followed by three other vessels—a tug boat, and two steamers of size, drawing probably sixteen or seventeen feet of water. The tug, being a fast boat, made a desperate effort to pass the *Garbieh* ; but failed. A collision ensued, the effect of which showed that the captain of the *Garbieh* did not mean to run on the bank to please anybody, and convinced the smaller craft that it had better stay in its place.

Kantara is interesting as being the ancient Pelusium, on the great route for pilgrims on

their way to Jerusalem. The modern town, which has come into existence with the Canal, stands on either side of that highway ; and every house therein was gaily decorated with flags, as were all the other stations along the Canal. The passage through Lake Menzaleh is most interesting. From the Canal boats nothing could be seen owing to the high banks ; but from the deck of a steamer many a pleasant view can be obtained. Flocks of birds wade in the shallows or fly lazily along in front of you—making every sportsman long to make Kantara his head-quarters for a week. Ducks, large and tame, coots, hern, ibis, spoon-bill, and pelican could be seen, in flocks or singly, according to the habits of each species.

CHAPTER XII.

FAST IN THE BANK.

On board the "Garbiéh," November 18.

I HAD written thus far, and was just about to speak of the wash caused by a steamer of this size, when great commotion on deck and the sound of many persons rushing frantically hither and thither, as is the manner at meal times, led me to suppose it was breakfast hour. And so indeed it was ; but that was not the immediate cause of the excitement. Our pilot had run us right into the bank ! The speed of the vessel had been slackened for some reason or other, just before a curve in the Canal, and so had not 'way' enough to make her answer her helm, and there we were. Two vessels—an Italian and a Turk—passed us with ease, and very unkind were the salutations with which we were greeted by those on board. *Addio ! A revederci !* and other ex-

clamations indicative of their small hopes of seeing us at the ball at Ismailia to-night, were hurled at us from all sides. We tried to chaff in return, and we tried to cheer, but it was no use, for we felt that we were in an awkward position. Hawsers were got out, and, much to our surprise and delight, we were got off and again progressing. But not for long. The length of the vessel prevented her getting round that corner, and there she fixed herself right across the channel, touching fore and aft, with three large ships immediately in rear, blessing us audibly. One of these is the *Delta*; another a large Swedish frigate. Now two small steamers came up to convey to Ismailia as many of the passengers as could be accommodated, and the rest of us are waiting either for good luck to the *Garbieh* or for the return of those tugs. After a deal of pulling here, pulling there, and shouting everywhere for the space of four hours, the vessel is said to be again afloat, and ready to go, but that a rope has got round her screw. How it will all

end, remains to be seen. The officers, good men every one of them, are doing their utmost, and will bring the vessel on this afternoon, if skill and persevering determination can avail. I have not been able to get the exact tonnage of the *Garbieh*, but the best information obtainable is that she is at least 2,000 tons, 320 feet in length, and drawing 17 feet of water. It is to her length and to that solely, that the present situation is to be attributed ; and so long as there are curves on the Canal like this Kantara one, vessels of great length will be liable to find themselves in like straits, if they attempt the through passage.

There were one or two other points I had intended to touch upon, but the necessity of going on board a tug at once in order to make sure of reaching Ismailia to-night, compels me to defer them. So we leave the *Garbieh*, all ready to sail except that her screw is locked, blocking the channel for a long line of steamers, whose impatience is being manifested in a variety of ways there

is no mistaking, and steam off ignominiously for Ismailia in a rickety tug. Naturally one's temper is not improved by occurrences of this kind, and mine, people tell me, gave way sadly. I always say they mistook energy for anger, and fancied I knocked the Arabs about, while, in truth, I merely patted them lovingly in such a way as to inspire them with some of my own spirit, for I felt there was no help now in aught but action. It was very amusing also to note that these 'candid' strictures were not passed upon 'that young Englishman' till after he had himself carried, or caused to be carried, on board the tug, the luggage they were too apathetic or helpless to move. Then it was that they spoke of the shepherd who drove his flock with a rod of iron, and moralised upon the manner in which one contracts imperious habits from a long residence in India. It is very amusing. However, we reached Ismailia in time for the *fêtes*; and I hold that the end justified the means.

CHAPTER XIII.

'L'AIGLE' AT ISMAILIA.

Ismailia, November 17.

BEFORE proceeding to give any description of Ismailia itself, or of the scene it presented, let us watch with Mr. Dicey, who had gone on ahead, the arrival of the Empress Eugenie:—"It was getting towards evening, and the sun was very low in the West. When I got down to the coast of the lake, where the crowd had grown denser and closer ever since I passed through it a couple of hours before, already the tide of public feeling had turned, and strangers were beginning to congratulate each other on the success of the Canal. The reasons of this change in popular feeling were manifest enough. At the Suez mouth of the Canal, leading into the lake, there lay two steamers of the Messageries Imperiales,

which had come up straight from the Red Sea ; and across the desert by El Guisr to the north, you could see, through a dark mass of smoke, the tall masts of a vessel, rising above the sand hills. From hillock to hillock, from group to group the tidings had passed along that the masts belonged to the *Aigle*, and that the Empress of the French was on board. No scepticism and no despondency could stand proof against the testimony of those taper masts which now with the naked eye you watch moving slowly across the sand horizon. The multitude so downcast an hour or two before by the anticipation of failure, was now elated by the consciousness of success. Amongst the crowd there were few who had not some personal interest in the triumph of the enterprise whose final accomplishment had arrived after so many years of delay, and difficulty, and hope deferred. Men shook hands with each other without cause or previous knowledge ; cheers were raised

from time to time, and taken up heartily ; people laughed, cheered, and shouted by turns ; and in many faces and many voices you could catch the symptoms of an excitement not far removed from hysterical passion. Surely, since the days when the Ten Thousand caught sight of the sea at last, and shouted "Thalatta, Thalatta !" there can have been few emotions more vivid than those of the multitude on the shores of Lake Timsah as the masts of the *Aigle* rose clearer and clearer out of the pall of smoke.

"On she came, winding slowly and surely through the turns of the canal, and when at last her hull came fully into view as she glided into the broad waters of the Lake, there was one loud, deafening cheer, which was drowned almost before it was begun by the roar of cannon. From the batteries on the banks, the bang of the heavy guns came booming across the water ; the sharp, quick rattle of platoon firing followed, and the

troops shouted with the hoarse, brief Egyptian cry as the first sea-going vessel which had ever crossed the Isthmus steamed into the inland lake, having on board the Empress of the French, the wife of the Sovereign who, through ill and good report, has been staunch in his support of the enterprise which now stood tested, proved, and accomplished. The last rays of the setting sun shone brightly on the low sand-hills which surround the lake, upon the masts, and the groups of spectators clustered like ants on the bare black slopes, upon the still blue waters, upon the flags which the *Aigle* flaunted forth, upon the wide expanse of the desert stretching away into the far distance. And as the *Aigle* came on, the two French steamers that had come up from Suez passed out of the cutting, under which they lay moored, into the lake. Then scarcely had the *Aigle* got clear of the straits ere she was followed by the *Latif*; and then the Imperial Austrian yacht passed into view, bearing at

its main mast the yellow-standard of the House of Hapsburg. There was a pause before any other ship hove into sight ; and meanwhile the night had come on, and the crowd, seeing that the Empress was not about to land, dispersed hastily. Of the thousand lights that twinkled forth as the dusk set in, of the vast labyrinth of lights crowded with dusky figures in every variety of garb, of the fireworks, of the fair, the strange, wild gathering of many nations, and of the evening which followed the entry, I must write to you by-and-by. It is late ; and yet from my hut I can hear the sounds of music and dancing in the Arab encampment ; the rockets are still soaring at interval into the sky, lighting up the darkness with a passing gleam and flash." *

CHAPTER XIV.

ISMAILIA.

Ismailia, November 20.

As we rounded the promontory that marks the entrance to Lake Timsah from the Canal, Ismailia burst suddenly on view—a veritable oasis in the desert.

Lake Timsah will be remembered by many as a sandy, uninteresting valley, without a single tree, bush, or dwelling upon which the eye could rest; indeed several of our company had ridden on donkey back over the very ground which was now the bed of the lake. The lake presented at once an imposing and beautiful spectacle as we entered it. Naturally the first point that attracted notice was the forest of masts at the further end, near the town, where one sought out the different vessels he had seen at Port-Said, and whose entrance into the Canal there had

excited so much interest. There they lay, covering an expanse of water nearly equal to that occupied by vessels in Bombay harbour, and every one of them gaily bedecked with flags and steamers. A nearer approach to the shore showed something of the preparations that had been made there. To describe these preparations in anything like detail would be impossible; triumphal arches, flags, banners, devices for firework displays after night-fall, military bustle, accompanied with much music of the Egyptian order, together with the air of festivity imparted to everything by the inroad of some five or six thousand strangers,—many splendidly dressed ladies, and still more showy Arabs, made up a scene which few ever witnessed the like of before. But for the fact that the streets were all new, and many of the dwellings temporary, none could have imagined themselves in the midst of the desert. Crowds of Bedouin Arabs, on their fleet steeds and picturesque camels, had assembled by

invitation to behold the glory of the land, and these, by their mere presence, contributed greatly to make one feel almost bewildered as he endeavoured fully to realize what all the ceremony in which he was taking part indicated.

The first thing that strangers did on getting ashore naturally was to enquire for their lodging. An application at the office of the Government Agent, access to which was by no means easy—such were the crowds—secured an order to the superintendent of one of the camps to provide tent accommodation at once; and, this tent accommodation once secured, the visitor was free to go whithersoever he listed, finding gigantic wooden palaces in central positions where breakfast and dinner were provided at stated hours, and refreshments supplied *ad libitum* when required. In one of those erections there must have been at least 1,500 at dinner together—to be succeeded by nearly as many more as places became vacant.

Ismailia is an exceedingly beautiful town, delightfully situated; and it is being remarkably well laid out. The streets are wide and at right angles to each other as far as possible; here we come upon a fine square, the houses around which, though mere *chalets*, are substantial and neat, while the centre of it is planted with ornamental trees and flowering shrubs. Amidst the whole several buildings stand out prominently, chief of which are the Khedive's new palace, Mr. Lesseps' residence, the Government offices, the Post office, Hotel, &c. Besides the palace, the Khedive has a delightful *chalet*, built on an eminence at the entrance of the lake by the Canal Company, and presented to His Highness by them. Another feature of Ismailia is the Water Works, where are the pumping engines that supply Kantara, Port-Said, and all the places on the Canal between this and the Mediterranean with water from the Sweet Water Canal. Around these Water Works there is as delightful a garden as one

could wish to see, in which grapes, oranges, plantains, and other fruits, besides all manner of vegetables, grow to perfection. Indeed the sweet water has done much to beautify the whole of Ismailia, for on either side of the principal streets grow trees, shrubs, and flowers, tended as only the better class of French mechanics perhaps ever would tend them.

But let me briefly relate how it was I came to know Ismailia so well ; for, truth to tell, the intention of several of us was to bring up our correspondence to date on board ship or in our tents on shore, that we might with the greater vigour enter into the festivities of the night. But the devil disposes. Immediately on reaching the landing place, Mr. Simpson of the *Illustrated London News*, with whom I had ridden many a weary mile and scrambled down many a torrent bed in Abyssinia, and myself were mindful chiefly of the outgoing mail. Feeling assured that the steamer would re-

main where she was for some time, we rushed off to the Post Office with our budgets, leaving our luggage and friends on board. Naturally we hurried back, but only to find everything gone—boat, baggage, friends, and all. There was a nice position to be in—travel-stained and dusty, hardly fit to be seen in decent society, bound to go to the Ball in the evening, with our kit nowhere ! Off we set in vigorous search of it. Being told that the gentlemen who had accompanied us were encamped in a certain quarter of the town, thither we proceeded, but found them not. Every camp was searched in like manner, with like success. Ere now it was dark, and the whole town had a wild weird aspect from the charcoal fires which, at regular intervals, lit up the streets. Moreover, we had walked twelve miles if we had walked one, and we felt tired. Likewise we felt hungry. So we gave over our search on land, and proceeded to dine before commencing our search afloat. The Chateau Lafitte that

night possessed a flavour beyond its own ; we were not dainty, and we dined splendidly, going forth mightily refreshed, and more at peace with mankind. Slowly we trudged along to the pier ; extravagantly we paid a Greek seaman to take us off first to one ship and then to another, searching, and tacking, and rowing till ‘ Bono Johnny’ began to get crusty. But a little Italian kept him in tolerable humour ; sometimes, indeed, we made him laugh. We were in no humour to enjoy the splendid scene around—ships illuminated every spar and mast, the shore a blaze of light, rockets in every direction. We were melancholy men. At last we saw the *Hawk*, and took courage. We knew we had true friends on board. The crew gave us a little information and a little liquor. Both were god-sends, we took a note of the one and drank the other, and proceeded in the direction indicated. For another hour we sailed about, and it was now ten o’clock. Patience was exhausted, and

the vote was—just one more ship, and if that fails, we'll give it up and bear our ill luck like men. To that last ship we proceeded guided only by chance. We were hailed in very unpromising language, for she was the *Senaar*, an Egyptian man-of-war, and the sentry wanted us to explain to him in Arabic who we were and what we wanted. We couldn't exactly do that, but I assured him my name was Norval, on the Grampian Hills, &c., which did quite as well. He was evidently "flabbergasted," for he not only allowed us to go on board, but "made very much polite" over us. We went down stairs, and peeped into the saloon. I saw a portmanteau I knew, and I saw my own ! We were all there again. The Arab Commodore—a fine old man—entered into our joy, laughed with us, and got us coffee. We did not take long to dress, you may be sure. Nor did it take Bono Johnny long to pull us to the landing place, for we were not in a frame of mind to stand any nonsense.

And yet, how happy we two were: what fun we made of our adventure !

Magnificent as was the spectacle Ismailia presented by day, its appearance at night was grand and beautiful beyond all description. On the lake lay some thirty vessels, and each was illuminated according to the taste and appliances of those on board. Here stood out a few steamers—French and Austrian—of which funnel, masts, spars, and ropes were distinctly delineated by innumerable lights ; there were others hung with devices in Chinese lanterns ; and others still on which the lime light was being turned to account in a marvellous fashion. Nor was this all ; salvoes of rockets shot through the air, the course of the one flight crossing that of the other, and giving rocket displays a beauty they do not ordinarily possess. And all this could be seen to the best advantage, as the town rises on a gentle slope above the lake. In the town itself there were hundreds of devices in lights of various

colours; the streets had on each side, at intervals of only a few yards, large pyramids of candles, enclosed in lanterns of which three sides were glass and the fourth polished tin, so that there was none of that flickering that usually distinguishes displays of the kind, and the effect was intensified as well. At the junctions of the streets, also, triumphal arches had been erected, bidding welcome to the various royal personages present : these at night presented only one blaze of flame. Amid the whole, so drawn up as to be beheld to the best advantage, stood groups of Egyptian lancers and infantry, the dresses and accoutrements of which were wierd-like in the extreme when viewed at such a time and place. During the whole evening, from stations specially selected as being visible from all sides, went up showers of light according to the device of cunning pyrotechnists ; and on every street plied carriages and omnibuses, with outriders, to covey the Viceroy's guests to the

ball. That none might walk there on foot, or ride a donkey through ignorance of the provision that had been made for him, the omnibuses were inscribed behind and before—"Service for the Ball." Yet, it is needless to say that many had to walk notwithstanding; and they had little to grumble at on that account.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BALL AT ISMAILIA.

On board the "Senaar," November 21.

THE grand ball at the Viceroy's palace commenced at ten, and terminated some time towards dawn. Who could describe such a ball? Its chief feature was the enormous number present—three-fourths being gentlemen; the privilege of dancing was, therefore, confined to a few. The next feature that struck one was the immense number and variety of splendid uniforms displayed, different in colour and cut from anything the beholder had probably ever before conceived. To enumerate them would be out of question; for such an amount of knowledge as the accomplishment of such a task would require has not, I am sure, been given to any man out of Worth's. Naval uniforms predominated—French, Austrian, Danish,

Russian, Swedish, Turkish, Spanish, and Dutch. England was very well represented—probably more numerous than any other nation, Sir Alexander Milne having been present with as many of the officers of his fleet as could be spared, or as could find means of accomplishing the journey. The decorations displayed were dazzling in the extreme. Who opened the ball, or who danced with whom, I really made no attempt to discover. Of course there was a grand supper at which the royal guests sat down with the others, screened somewhat from the vulgar gaze by a row of shrubs and festoons of flowers, inside of which the glitter of diamonds and other gems was distinctly visible in all parts of the room. At least two thousand persons must have been at table at one time, and at least as many more in the various ante-rooms or in the grounds. Indeed, even when the ball was at its height, and when the supper room seemed most crowded, all the streets in the neighbour-

hood of the palace were thronged with ladies and gentlemen whose dress proclaimed that they had come from the gay throng inside, both to get a breath of fresh air and to see the brilliant spectacle around them. Some may think that too much has been made in the foregoing remarks of these festivities. But I would guard against this by observing that the above was written two days after the events described took place, when the excitement attending them had been toned down most effectually by a variety of circumstances, and moreover that it was written in the midst of coal dust and discomfort, where one does not take a rosy view of things without cause. And, as all present in Ismailia on the 18th know full well, the half has not been told. But I must pass on to the departure on the morrow (the 19th) for the Salt Lakes, *en route* for Suez.

On the morning of the 19th there was a terrible rush to the steamers, and only a comparative few succeeded in effecting an

embarkation. How happy did a few of us consider ourselves when we again set foot on the *Senaar*, formerly the *China* of Captain Sherard Osborn's Chinese squadron. The *Senaar* would be at Suez in six hours' time, if her way were only clear; for she has made the voyage from Suez to Ismailia at the rate of 9 knots an hour, drawing 13 feet. But having loitered about in the Lake till three-fourths of the steamers are in before her, among others the French steamer *Peluse*, which is always causing delays owing to her length, it is doubtful if three days will see her again in Suez harbour. About twelve o'clock on the 19th, the Empress's yacht steamed very slowly down the Lake to the mouth of the Canal, and proceeded so cautiously there that the impression got abroad that she had taken the ground. Some even said they saw her going full speed astern; but at any rate, after a long hour's delay, the procession started. After Her Majesty, as before, went the Emperor of Austria; next the Prince Imperial of Prussia; next

the Prince and Princess of Holland ; next the Prince of Sweden ; and next the *Psyche*, with Mr. Elliott, the British Ambassador from Constantinople. After these went vessels pretty much as they liked. At night many anchored in the Lake, and many more in the mouth of the Canal, for stoppages ahead had been very frequent—the *Peluse*, and an Austrian frigate being among the defaulters. There may have been many more, of whose ill luck no news reached the middle and rear of the line.

This morning, suppose the scene changed. It was still a case of waiting, tired of which, I hailed a contractor's barge that was passing, dropped over the side into it by means of a rope, and was off to Serapeum, intending to make my way to Suez in this same barge, or some other if possible ; failing that, by train ; failing that, in whatsoever way might be practicable. Soon we passed six large steamers, and could we only have continued our journey, we should have been in Suez in time to see the Empress arrive. But the

contractor could not be worked up to the proper pitch of enthusiasm, which was to me a cause of great grief and sorrow. It would have been delightful thus to run along the line, and note the progress of each vessel. But that was denied me. For in the Salt Lakes, quite an inland sea, steamer after steamer passed us ; yea the *Senaar* passed within twenty yards of us, and greatly was I chaffed by my old friends over my luck they left me behind, and mightily did I feel "riled in" in consequence. Right glad was I when the vessels anchored in the Canal for the night to be rowed down several miles in a canoe, and to crawl up the ladder on board my old ship. There I was received with much banter, yet with genuine kindness and pleasure ; they received me as the repentant prodigal, and opened the best tin of Crosse and Blackwell's they had on board, and poured forth the best wine. And their goodness was timely, for my last regular meal had been breakfast at Ismailia, two days ago.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STEAMER RACE IN THE DESERT.

IF eight or nine hours on a steam barge, with absolutely nothing wherewith to refresh one's-self except the fragrant weed, was not altogether the sum of human happiness, the questionable fortune was more than compensated for by a sight which was seen by few, and which probably none will ever see again. It was a neck-and-neck race between three ocean steamers in the Lacs Amers, or Bitter Lakes. The stand-point, also, from which the race was viewed was the most advantageous that could have been chosen. As it happened, the barge was all but at the Suez end of the Lakes, when at the other side, just beyond Serapeum, a steamer entered. A glance through the glass shewed that he was an Egyptian, for she carried the Crescent ; a

second proved her to be the *Senaar*. Close upon her heels came the *Principe Amadeo*, an Italian vessel ; and, at no great distance, the *Principe Tomaso*, likewise an Italian. So that the whole course from start to finish, and every incident connected therewith, were open to view.

But a few weeks before, what is now covered by the waters of the Bitter Lakes formed one of the most dreary features of the whole land of Egypt. Nowhere throughout the desert could a less inviting or less picturesque expanse be found. Now, however, the enterprise and perseverance of M. Lesseps have changed all that, and the Salt Lakes have sprung up a lovely inland sea, enlivened by many a gay steamer passing and repassing upon its unruffled bosom. Those who were present in Egypt during the latter half of November saw much to surprise and delight them—many an incident of which to take note and fondly cherish the remembrance. Those few who saw the steamer race will long recall the

excitement with which it was regarded, and long hear the echo of the cheers and counter-cheers from the quarter-decks and bulwarks of the rival vessels.

In the scramble that took place at Ismailia for precedence in entering the Canal, the *Principe Amadeo*, a vessel built on the Clyde, found itself just ahead of the *Principe Tomaso*, a steamer built on the Tyne, by the Messrs. Palmer, one of the line running between Brindisi and Alexandria. And just ahead of both these was the *Senaar*, the flag ship of the Egyptian squadron in the Red Sea. Here was a chance for a race, and at once the *Tomaso* threw down the gauntlet. The *Amadeo* finding that her opponent was gaining upon her, drew up her boats which were in tow, threw out every stitch of canvas, and did her speedy utmost, leaving the *Tomaso* with apparent ease, and gaining upon the Egyptian, which was evidently outpaced. The *Tomaso* thereupon also drew up her boat, which was dragging, and set sail before a

fair wind, thus for a time improving her position. All three vessels were now close together, and for a time not a sound could be heard from either. Soon, however, a ringing cheer from the Italians announced the defeat of the Egyptian, to which they courteously dipped their flags, and raced by. Half the course had now been crossed, and there was not much time in which to decide the contest between the representatives of the Clyde and the Tyne. The *Tomaso*, therefore, made a last effort, and it was a successful one ; she passed the lighthouse at the Suez end of the Lake four or five lengths ahead of the *Amadeo*, thus gaining, say, one length in every mile. The closeness of the contest aroused the greatest interest and excitement among the passengers. Would that the multitude then pouring into Suez had been on the bank at Chalouf to see it, for it was a pretty and a novel sight. Who could have looked thereon, and realised that he stood in the midst of the desert in the Land of the Pharoahs ?

CHAPTER XVII.

ISMAILIA TO SUEZ.

Suez, November 21.

AT ten o'clock this morning no fewer than forty-six vessels had arrived safely in Suez harbour through the Canal, and I have seen several arrive since that time. It may now be said that there are here fifty steamers from Port-Said, and probably that is under rather than over the mark. These vessels have been drawing from 13 to 16 or 17 feet of water, being without cargo, and having only sufficient coal to meet their present requirements. The great majority of these fifty have steamed from sea to sea without touching the ground even once, however lightly ; indeed the great defaulters, who have been constantly blocking the road, may be limited to three—the *Latif*, the *Garbieh* (Turk), and the *Peluse*, one of

the Messageries Imperiales. These are all long vessels of 16 or 17 feet of draught, and have not answered their helm promptly.

Now I must return to the point where my previous letter left the procession. I had got upon a steam barge, and was successfully running a race with the fastest steamers, congratulating myself upon the prospect of reaching Suez in all probability before the Empress herself. But that dream was soon over. On reaching the Bitter Lakes—quite a pretty little inland sea, much larger than Loch Lomond—the tables were turned. Then vessel after vessel put on full speed, and all we had to do was to keep well out of the way, ignominiously left behind, as noted in a previous chapter.

At the entrance of the Bitter Lakes next to Port-Said much widening of the channel is yet necessary ; and the same is needful in still greater degree from Suez some eight or ten miles back. At both these points, as well as at El Guisr, on the Port-Said

side of Lake Timsah, the works are still in progress. Vessels leaving the Canal to enter the Bitter Lakes find their course for some distance buoyed out for them at either end ; and vessels entering the channel from the Lake are guided by good light-houses, which cannot fail to indicate precisely the entrance to the channel. From Port-Said, keep the light-houses on your left ; from Suez, keep them on your right. The first glimpse of these Lacs discloses a piece of scenery which, for Egyptian scenery, is remarkably fine.

The outline of the lake cannot be traced, it is far too large for that ; but there is one point where its limit can be affirmed. A range of hills stretches out into the water, ending in a bold abrupt point ; and beyond is another range, still more abrupt and lofty, the two together, with the placid expanse of green water underneath forming a bit of scenery which, but that it is in Egypt, is in no respect Egyptian. And on entering

the Lake, there was another but very different scene on which the eye stained itself. That was the long line of vessels, looking so big and majestic on such a small piece of water, and the still longer line reaching far away towards Suez, the position of each indicated only by curling smoke and towering masts moving, as it seemed, through the sand. And they moved on without any interruption worth mentioning till after nightfall. About eight o'clock, a stoppage took place in front, just near the entrance of Suez harbour, and vessel after vessel had to anchor for the night. This stoppage was caused not so much by the darkness, for there was a glorious moon, as by the great fall of tide in the Red Sea, and consequently of water in the Canal. The channel seemed to be reduced to one-half its usual width, in some places to a still greater degree. So much so was this the case that not even the coal barge aforesaid could pass a ship in the channel, but had to anchor as well as the

larger craft. Moreover the small boat in which I rowed along to rejoin the vessel I had left in the morning, that I might not again go supperless to bed, found difficulty in squeezing through between the vessel's sides and the sand. This is no myth, for I vouch that she was carefully and skilfully steered, and that she had several times to be shoved off with the oars. This was at the point where I said above more widening is necessary.

On the 20th over twenty vessels passed through, and on the morning of the 21st (to-day) the remainder followed, giving the result with which I opened this letter. Altogether, the voyage of the fleet from Ismailia to Suez was far more successful than any one expected—certainly far more so than that from Port-Said to Ismailia. The steersmen and navigators had become “knowing” no doubt, and had benefited by the experience acquired in the former part of the Canal. Now that we are all through

—all, that is to say, that were in any way fitted for the journey—the inauguration cannot but be regarded as a success. People may criticise very unfavourably the Canal of to-day; but all unprejudiced persons are impressed with the belief that there is a grand high-way of commerce in the future.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FÊTES AT SUEZ.

Suez, November 21.

THE *fêtes* at Suez were beheld by the party on board the *Senaar* as a Patriarch, once a man of note in Egypt—beheld the Promised Land—afar off. We left our ship and sat high upon the bank of the Canal, viewing the illumination and the fireworks a few miles below us. Our position was Little Chalouf. Fortunately Mr. Dicey, a brother correspondent, was ahead, and he will supply the leading characteristics of the demonstration, which was necessarily tame compared to those we had witnessed elsewhere, and were yet to witness at Cairo:—

“Long before we reached Suez, we could tell by the white puffs of smoke which rose up into the sky from the south that the *Aigle* had entered the roadstead. It was

one o'clock before we turned the corner of the long piers which enclose the end of the Canal, and found ourselves once more on the open sea. Steaming slowly across the neck of the Red Sea, we passed the new quay, decked out with triumphal arches, flags, and wreaths, cast anchor in the outer dock, under shelter of the breakwater; and our cruise was at an end.

“The quays and wharves were crowded with knots of holiday folk, and there was no lack of cheering and counter-cheering, as ship after ship sailed up to its anchorage. But the first flush of exultation had been exhausted by the reception of the *Aigle*, and even at its best the excitement was far inferior to that of the first day at Ismailia. The occasion in itself was not calculated to stir up so much feeling, and the shore population of Suez was a mere drop in the bucket compared with the multitude gathered together on the shores of Lake Timsah. The afternoon was occupied in farewell visits

between the various Royal personages, the Emperor of Austria and the Crown Prince of Prussia starting by special train for Cairo; and there was the usual amount of saluting and cannonading. In the evening, the Empress, escorted by M. de Lesseps, visited the town of Suez on foot, and dropped into several of the curiosity shops with which this quaint terminus town abounds. At night the ships were all illuminated; and a display of fireworks, of more than usual brilliancy, brought the Suez fêtes to an end. The ropes and masts hung with lamps combined with the long lines of light with which the buildings on the quay were pricked out to create the illusion that a fairy city of fire had been set afloat by some magician's wand upon the waters of the Red Sea.

“There were dinners given on board of all the ships in the harbour in honour of the occasion. Not the least noteworthy was one given by Mr. Pender, on the deck of the *Hawk*, to a large party of English gen-

tllemen. Besides our host, we had Lord Houghton, whose presence at any great public gathering seems to be a matter of course; Mr. Elliot, M. P., the great promoter of submarine telegraphy; Mr. Gregory, M. P.; Mr. Hawkshaw, the one English engineer who had the foresight and courage to foretell the future success of the Suez Canal; the Mayor of Manchester; Mr. Russell, of the *Scotsman*; Mr. Parkinson, of the Inland Revenue; and a score of other gentlemen, each one of whom was a man of more or less mark in his own line of life. Mr. Pender, Mr. Elliot, and Mr. Hawkshaw—men whose opinion on such a question is worth recording—stated their conviction, in after-dinner speeches, that not only was the Canal an assured success in an engineering point of view, but that it was available for present use, and that from this day forward the tide of traffic between India and Europe must flow through the Suez Canal."

At noon to-day the Empress of the French

goes to visit the Wells of Moses. She is to be present at a religious thanksgiving service for the success of the Canal; and, with dawn on Monday, the *Aigle* makes sail for Port-Said, and thence for France. Her Majesty's Eastern tour, like the Suez Canal, has been a brilliant and unexpected success; and the wiseacres who prophesied that the Imperial journey must end in a *fiasco* are as much out in their reckoning as the clever people who were perfectly convinced that the Canal would never be constructed.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAIRO AGAIN.—THE BALLROOM AND THE RACE
COURSE.*Cairo, November 24.*

THE events of the Cairo week are the next in order of the inauguration *fêtes*, and, equally with those at Port-Said and Ismailia, deserve a place in the chronicles. They were, in the first place, the most extensive of all, although they probably wanted that grandeur which the Khedive's purse and the pyrotechnist's art were both taxed to impart to the Ismailia display: There were no fire balloons, rockets, and red fire at Cairo; nor was there the shipping, which both by day and night looked so picturesque and grand on Lake Timsah; but Cairo, with its fine avenues, extensive squares, and noble palaces, possessed advantages of its own which neither Port-Said nor even favoured

Ismailia will possess for many a day. And besides all this, it will be interesting to know how many different ways contributed to swallow up the three millions of pounds sterling—the sum which, it is calculated, the Viceroy must have expended in connection with the opening of the Canal.

On the 20th of November, then, the leading vessels had reached Suez from Ismailia, and the passengers thereby had been whirled off to Cairo by special trains, in order to make room for those who followed. On the morning of the 21st, the great majority of the fifty and odd steamers rode at anchor in Suez Harbour, and those who had come by them hurried away to catch the train then on the point of starting, that they might reach the Egyptian capital in time for the grand ball to be given that evening in honor of the Emperor of Austria. There was one distinguished visitor who did not so return—the Empress Eugenie. She had enjoyed all the fêting on the way from Port-Said to

Suez; all the plaudits of the mixed multitude had been for her; and now she quietly and gracefully withdrew, that the Emperor of Austria might have his share. Her Majesty bade the Khedive good-bye at Suez, and after visiting objects of interest to her in and around that city—strolling, for instance, an unrecognised and amused spectator of what was going on in the court-yard of the Suez Hotel; visiting the troop-ship *Malabar*, &c., and leaving a handsome *souvenir* with Captain Rich, the Commander, returned in her yacht to Port-Said. The Prince Imperial of Prussia, accompanied, I believe, by other royal strangers, departed on an excursion up the Nile.

After a long, hot day's journey, the guests were landed at Cairo just in time to dress for the Viceroy's ball, which was to be given at the Boulak Palace in honour of the Emperor of Austria. There is not much to be said about the ball, as, indeed, there is little to be said about most of the State galas of

the Viceregal Court. The one ambition of the Viceroy—as long, at any rate, as he is entertaining his European guests—is to reproduce Europe in Egypt. His efforts are successful in their way; and it would be difficult in London or Paris to give a handsomer ball than that given at Cairo in honour of the Emperor. There were any number of wax lights, crowds of handsomely dressed men and women, a brilliant orchestra, a capital supper, and a very regiment of waiters in gorgeous liveries. As Mr. Dicey continues:—"All these things are good in their way; and it may seem ungrateful to grumble because they were not good in a different way. Still, you could hardly help asking yourself why you should have come to the Nile to be present at an entertainment you might have seen given to much better effect on the banks of the Thames or the Seine. The men were dressed by Poole, the women by Worth; the orchestra was composed of Germans; the dance music was taken from

the 'Belle Hélène' and the 'Grande Duchesse.' The waiters were Frenchmen, dressed in red English liveries; and the supper might have been furnished by Chevet or Gunter. Except for the fezes worn by a number of the foreigners in the employment of the Egyptian Government, there was nothing to recall the fact that you were in the land of the Pharaohs. There was a small sprinkling of Arabs Sheikhs; but their proportion to the European guests—one, perhaps, in a hundred—was so small that their presence gave no character to the entertainment. The Emperor of Austria made but a short sojourn at the ball, and walked through the rooms with the Khedive while the band played the Imperial Austrian March. Dancing was kept up to a very late hour; and the one picturesque incident of the whole evening was the change from the ball-room, where you fancied yourself in Europe, to the court-yard of the Palace, where white-clad syces, Arab donkey-boys,

with their blue blouses and bare legs, and khevasses, with their hippopotamus whips, stood waiting for the departure of the guests."

From the ball room we adjourned to snatch a few hours' repose, and to prepare for the Grand Races next day, also in honour of the Emperor Francis Joseph :—

"Somewhat of a like criticism as to the total absence of any Oriental colouring may be made on the races given on Monday in the Abassieh Plain. Still, with all the good will in the world, you cannot Anglicise the Desert, or Frenchify the vegetation of the East ; and, therefore, about these Cairo races there was something not to be confounded with one's recollections of Epsom or the Bois de Boulogne. You drove along a road lined with prickly pears, palm groves, and pepper trees ; you passed under the shadow of mosques whose walls are painted gridiron fashion, with broad stripes of red and yellow ; you wound your way through dusky crowds of turbaned figures,

through strings of camels, till at last you left behind you a barrack-looking palace, where Abbas Pasha used to keep his harem, and found yourself in mid-desert. Of all portions of the Sand Sea which I have yet visited, this bay, if I may apply the term, which runs in through the Delta's shores right up to the outskirts of Cairo, corresponds most closely to my notion of what the Desert ought to be : a vast expanse of rolling billows of yellow sand stretches as far as the eye can reach. Here there are none of the ridges, hollows, heights, banks, and valleys which break the uniformity of the Desert as I have seen it elsewhere. The undulations in the surface of the sand are here so slight that, from a little distance, the Desert hard by the Abassieh looked flat. Only as you drew nearer could you perceive that the race-course lay on the side of a great shelving slope. The sand was yellow, with a deep tawny hue; your carriage-wheels sunk well-nigh up to the axle as the horses tugged

wearily over the plain ; the sun glared from a sky dazzling to the sight with its depth of cloudless blue. And yet there, upon a background so unfamiliar to the English eye, was placed the outward semblance of an English race-course. Grand stand, Jockey Club enclosure, tents for refreshments, weighing paddocks, and all the rest of the *mise-en-scène* of a thriving provincial meeting were provided for the Desert. The course was marked out with ropes ; the jockeys wore top-boots and velvet caps. Rows of London-built carriages, breaks, drags, barouches were drawn up on either side the course ; and, to make the illusion perfect, there were parties of gaily-dressed women unescorted by gentlemen, about whose lot in life no doubt could be entertained. The only things wanting were the ring and the roar of the betting men. Egypt, unfortunately, has not progressed far enough in its acquirement of Western civilisation to have produced a Welcher.

“There were crowds of Arabs, chiefly

donkey-boys, syces, khevasses, or camel-drivers, collected about the stands, and they seemed to me to take more genuine interest in the racing than I ever witnessed in any race-course crowd out of England. So far as I could see, none of the Egyptian ladies were present ; and the carriage company was exclusively composed of Europeans. At two o'clock the Khediveh and the Emperor of Austria drove up along the race-course in an open barouche with four horses, and with postilions and outriders dressed in English liveries, and the sport began forthwith. Race followed race with commendable rapidity. As the Viceroy dislikes being kept waiting, and has the power to make his displeasure felt by very potent arguments, there were no false starts ; and between two and six a dozen races were run, over distances varying from two to six miles in length. I confess that when you don't know the name of a single horse, and have not a sixpence on the event, the noble

sport always seems to me to be singularly dull ; and I doubt whether even sporting readers would be grateful to me for sending you a correct card of the Cairo November meeting. The only incidents in the day's legitimate sport I need record are, that whatever English and Arab horses ran together, the former invariably won, and that one of the gentlemen riders was a brother correspondent, who, unfortunately for the credit of literature, did not mount the winning horse. The dulness, however, of the legitimate racing was made up for to some degree by an eminently illegitimate race for speed between dromedaries. Three started ; one tailed off at an early period ; and the remaining two trotted three times round the course, six miles in all, neck by neck ; till they reached the Royal stand, when one of them, ridden by a negro, shot ahead and won in a canter. Knowing people said both the beasts belonged to the same owner,

and never raced at all. They certainly took twenty-seven minutes in doing six miles ; whereas I was informed by Sir Samuel Baker, who probably knows more about dromedaries than most men, that they ought to run at full racing pace five miles in fifteen minutes. So far as I could observe with the aid of a field-glass, a great part of the distance was done at a swinging walk, the gallop or fast trot being resorted to only when in sight of the stands. The mystery to me was how the riders kept their seats. Perched up on the top of the hump in a little seat, not unlike that in which a Hansom cabman sits, they had no apparent support for their feet. Their legs dangled loosely on either side the dromedary's neck ; and every moment you fancied they must fall off, as they leaned from side to side cracking their hippopotamus hide whips. However, there was no accident ; and the whole day's racing was unattended with a single casualty.

“On Tuesday and Wednesday the Emperor of Austria visited the lions of Cairo. On the evening of the latter day he drove, in company with the Viceroy, to the Pyramids of Ghiseh. Dinner had been sent out beforehand ; the road which, when I visited it a fortnight ago, was under water in many parts, had been completely repaired ; the dust over the ten miles’ drive was kept down by watering machines ; and, as the sunset was brilliant beyond even the ordinary brilliancy of Egyptian sunsets, the Royal party had an excellent view of the marvels of Egypt. During the day the Pyramids were visited and ascended by any number of foreign visitors ; and, after nightfall, when all the strangers had gone home, except a few who, like myself, had heard some rumour of the programme, the Pyramid of Cheops was illuminated for the benefit of the Emperor. The spectacle was very pretty, and the long lines of the Pyramid’s corners, lit up with magnesium lights, looked, from

a little distance, like a series of Jacob's ladders ascending up to heaven. Rockets were fired at intervals along the high-road till the Emperor of Austria had reached his palace ; and it was not till late at night that the road ceased to be encumbered with trains of camels bearing on their backs the English servants of the Khediveh, who had been sent out to the Pyramids in full livery.—‘Jeames’ riding astride upon a camel in all the glory of powder, scarlet coat, and silk knee breeches ! Such is one of the many anomalies you meet with in the land of the Pharaohs. Yesterday morning the Emperor returned to Alexandria, where he is to be present at a ball given by the Viceroy, and to-morrow he sails for Europe. People say at Cairo that he is home-sick and tired of travel. It may well be so. He looks worn and weary and sad enough. Heaven knows he has had enough to sadden him.”

Let us now drive and view the gay scenes out of doors. The whole of Cairo these few days

was splendidly illuminated—with gas, where gas was available, and with millions of candles where gas could not be employed. The taste with which the design for this display had been elaborated, and the skill with which it had been carried out, were alike admirable. Of course the Viceroy's palaces were the first thing to see, especially that on the Nile. Few who saw that palace, with its grounds and approaches, on the night of the 21st and three succeeding nights, ever saw so magnificent a sight before, or are likely soon to see such a sight again. Everything—trees, houses, fountains, all were absolutely lost in the blaze of light, not for one mile only, but for several, while in the squares on either side of the avenues and around the various residences, had been erected huge pyramids, which were a blaze of flags and steamers by day, and of many-coloured lamps by night. Between these more pretentious designs, and along every foot-path as far as the eye could reach, were festoons of lamps—nothing of

the false and meretricious Chinese order, but genuine composites, enclosed in neat little lanterns, with varicoloured glasses. Next to the brilliancy and beauty of the display, the uniformity and pleasing effect of the design could not fail to attract attention. The grandest effects were produced by a multiplicity of crescents and stars, each of which stood out with the most perfect distinctness from the surrounding mass. At every other turning, also, the strains of the Egyptian or some other national anthem fell upon the ear, though the players could not be seen, being hid away high overhead in galleries erected for them on the triumphal arches that here and there spanned the principal streets. At a short distance from the streets where carriages would be passing and repassing, other platforms had been erected, upon which strutted Thespians who sang and played for the amusement of the masses—a device which succeeded admirably in keeping the main thorough-

fares clear of crowds, thus preventing stagnation and accidents. It would be impossible to convey any true idea of the effect produced by a survey of the scene with all its concomitants ; perhaps to quote the exclamation uttered by an Englishman who had been looking on for some time and saying nothing may come nearest the end in view—"Why it would drive Smith of Cremorne mad !"

CHAPTER XX.

A DAY AT THE PYRAMIDS.

It was popularly believed in the hotels that His Majesty was to visit the Pyramids on the 24th, and great were the preparations made on the night of the 23rd to be away before the dawn, and to be able to cross the Nile, donkeys and all, before less early birds should cause a rush on the boats. Great were the precautions taken to secure a donkey with speed and staying power, as also to make sure of its appearance next morning at the time appointed, the customary plan being the one not unknown in India to visitors to Matheran—carrying off the animal's saddle, and depositing it in some corner where no donkey boy could lay hands on it before the possessor was in every way ready to mount.

And when next morning came, the square

of Eusbekkieh presented an extraordinary spectacle. Nearly every donkey in Cairo was in front of either one hôtel or another, and the apprehension among the donkey boys lest they should see neither the saddle nor the sahib of the evening before gave rise to considerable excitement, wrangling, hustling, and noise. The appearance of any one in quest of a donkey caused an immediate rush of donkey boys in that direction, to see whether he were the proper person, or no. In nine cases out of ten, nine donkey boys claimed the same saddle and the same man, and the unfortunate individual, not knowing very clearly 'who was who' in such a crowd, was generally glad to get out of it sound in limb, by mounting on any quadruped whatsoever.

And then, what a scene the road to the Nile ferry presented! The procession from the Hotel d'Orient was joined by the procession from the Hotel Abbat, and the two raced pell-mell to Shepherd's, where

others joined in the chase, as also did smaller parties from other quarters ; and with many a cry and shout, as well as with many an amusing incident and much laughter, the charge was kept up past Boulac, till the donkeys generally had proved themselves possessed of greater staying power than their riders, and each donkey boy more eager for the glory and success of his peculiar animal than was consistent with the ease and comfort of the person mounted thereon. This may to some appear somewhat trival ; but it is very certain no such gathering, from almost every nation on the face of the earth, ever visited the Pyramids before, and no such party that ever visited the Pyramids had greater opportunity or cause for merriment on the road. It would be unfair to mention names, especially as probably few will laugh at the incident now, but the soberest could not have refrained from indulging in at least an inward titter had he beheld, say, a noble Lord, after his

third spill—and he was by no means alone in his glory—pick himself up very desperately, and appealingly proclaim to the crowd who could not help manifesting their enjoyment of the fun, that ‘he had been but three times on horseback in his life, and he did not like the look of that donkey before he started.’

How all got across the Nile, swollen as it was, with a fresh breeze blowing, in those Nile boats, laden with men and animals as they were, is a marvel; but so far as is known not a single mishap of any consequence occurred. There were of course much vexation of spirit, much apprehension, and frequent collisions, and most people were careful and troubled in a greater or less degree for the space of an hour or so. For Nile boats are of a very peculiar build, quite different from what most of those struggling to get on board or sitting on their brim had seen before; and the cargoes, to most people’s way of thinking, were at

least twice as great as should have been embarked on things so flat and so shallow. But remonstrance was out of the question with those Arab gentry, who are as different from the Bombay dinghy-wallah or the Deal boatman as are their various craft are from those of the other.

Once across the Nile, a good carriage road to the very base of the Pyramids is found, of some six or seven miles in length, leading through alluvial plains—a perfect picture of fertility and beauty. The waters of the Nile had not long receded from them, and in some places the effect of the excessive flood, and of the absence of all means of restraining it, was very apparent. Here the bridges had been found wanting and had needed renewal or extensive repair; there the embankment of the railway had been carried clean away for hundreds of yards, and the rails and pot sleepers were left suspended in mid air; or huge channels had been riven by the currents through

fields of smiling grain. Yet the injury there is trifling compared to the havoc and devastation committed in many parts of Upper Egypt, where the country has been denuded of crops, and the people left to the dark prospect of present mud and impending famine. Of course a fine harvest has been assured for next year—if the ancient river does not indulge in the same freak as it has done this year.

Arrived at the Pyramids, the news got abroad that the Emperor was not to visit them that day, but on the morrow, when they were to be grandly illuminated in his honour. Few felt very greatly disappointed, none so much so as to be inconsolable by a good breakfast, for, what with dust, heat, fatigue and hunger combined, most people were not altogether in a frame of mind or body to postpone *dejeuner* even to cheer and otherwise badger the Emperor of Austria. The Pyramids and all their surroundings were rapidly explored, but

not before the day was well spent, and it was high time to return, in order to cross the river before dark. It is very pleasant to be able to record that not a single Englishman wrote himself down a vulgar fool by carving, writing, or otherwise delineating his name on or about the Pyramids. A special search failed to find one such name. Not so, however, with a number of gentlemen from Germany, who came specially provided with paint pots and brushes, and before a crowd, some of whom admired, though most derided, inscribed their names in large characters on the most prominent stones they could find, all up and down the large pyramid. Nobody ever heard of any of them before, and posterity will seek for traces of them at the Pyramids in vain, for though they never dreamt of such a contingency, of course a strong application of turpentine would have removed every trace of them and their vulgarity before next day's sunrise. The grotto of the Sphinx was like-

wise defaced in like manner, but a coat of whitewash will rectify all that. A certain "young Englishman," as he was generally called, made himself prominent and showed his disgust of the Cockney vulgarity by publicly expunging two names while the paint was wet, and making others illegible with his stick.

On the morning of the 25th, the sound of much trumpeting and the tramp of horses and men awoke the residents of the Square two hours sooner than they had been accustomed to; and those whom curiosity or a confirmed delight in early hours led to get up and see what was the matter, at once set out for the railway station, to see the Emperor of Austria depart for Alexandria. A special train had been provided, in which the Khedive and his son accompanied his royal guest to the Mediterranean. It is not now necessary to describe either Francis Joseph or Ismail Pacha, else a very delightful little picture might be presented of their appear-

ance as they left Cairo on that cold and somewhat foggy November morning, amid such shouts of "Vive l'Empereur," and "Vive le Khedive," as had seldom been heard in Egypt before; for the ordinary special train for Alexandria was also just about to leave the station, and there were very many Englishmen congregated there.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADDRESSES TO THE VICEROY.

Cairo, November 24.

As the day of departure drew near, the Address and Deputation mania set in. For an account of this, I am indebted to Mr. Maclean, who being virtually the representative of Manchester in Egypt, despite the presence of the Mayor, had special opportunities of knowing what the mercantile men were doing. On Tuesday, the 23rd, the English came to the front at last. The Viceroy had fixed 2 o'clock as the hour for receiving the address of the Corporation of Manchester. The deputation, consisting of the Mayor, Mr. Alderman Bennett, Mr. G. Armit, Mr. Macnaughtan, and Mr. B. Corkling went off to the Viceregal palace. The Khedive gave them a most gracious and cor-

dial reception. The Mayor addressed His Highness in the following speech:—

“As Mayor of one of the first cities of Great Britain, I feel it to be a source of just pride to take part in the inauguration of a work that would reflect glory on the most prosperous and powerful of empires. History has shown us that the genius of greatness has not been unfamiliar to the ancient soil of Egypt, and we look around us with wonder at the monuments sacred to the memory of the great mother of civilization. The canal of Suez, perfected under the vigorous administration of your Highness, and newly crowned in the presence of the world, evinces the old capacity for gigantic enterprizes, animated by the modern spirit of utility.

“There are now surrounding your Highness many of the rulers of the Western nations, joining you in dedicating to the service of mankind one of the greatest victories of courageous science. The city which I have the honour to represent to-day—a city which is the capital of one of the chief industries of Great Britain, the manufacture of cotton—cordially sympathizes with everything affecting the prosperity of Egypt. Lancashire and the territory of the Nile—so fertile of the staples of our commercial life—are united by the bonds of material interest, and I feel great pride and satisfaction in representing my fellow citizens

on an occasion so well designed to consolidate their union.

“Permit me, in conclusion, to offer to your Highness the cordial thanks not only of myself and the other members of this deputation, but of the whole body of English guests, for the princely hospitality we have all enjoyed during our stay in Egypt. From the moment of our landing in the country till now, when our visit is drawing to a close, we have found it to be the most anxious desire of every official in the service of your Highness to carry out your benevolent intentions towards us by gratifying our every wish ; all the comforts and luxuries of civilized life have been placed abundantly at our command ; and we have had the privilege of witnessing a series of fêtes unequalled probably for their magnificence even in the splendid East. I can assure your Highness that the recollections we shall carry away with us of all we have seen and of the treatment we have received at your hands in Egypt—of the memorable event of last week, the rejoicings by which it has been celebrated, and the munificence which has made every one of us feel as if he were ranked among your Highness’s personal friends—will be among the most pleasurable of our lives.”

The Mayor then read the address,—which was of a purely formal and complimentary character.

The Khedive thanked Mr. Grave and the deputation for the trouble they had taken in coming so far at his invitation, and trusted they had been gratified by their visit. He could state that he was making every effort to increase the cultivation of cotton in Egypt, that plans had been prepared, and would be carried out as speedily as possible, for making canals to promote irrigation, and he hoped by these and other means the growth of cotton in Egypt would be stimulated, and the supply of that staple of English manufacturing industry materially enlarged. The trade of his own territory with England and its dependencies was of great importance: no country could derive more advantage from the opening of the Suez Canal than England, both in the East and the West, not only in the interest of her own commerce, but also in that of British India; and, as year by year the navigation of the canal would be made easier and more satisfactory, he felt confident that the great end

he had in view, the improvement of Egypt, for measures designed at the same time to benefit all nations, would be furthered by the work that had just been completed.

Having given this formal reply, the Viceroy invited the members of the deputation to sit down with him on a couch, and had a long and frank conversation with them on various matters relating to the material improvement of Egypt. Speaking of the Suez Canal, he admitted that some mishaps had occurred, and that it would be necessary to widen and deepen some parts of the channel, in order to render the navigation perfectly easy and secure, but he considered that this was a question of detail, and that the success of the whole work had now been placed beyond doubt. He then referred again to the possibility of increasing the supply of Egyptian cotton, declared that it was one of the main objects of his policy to consult the interests of commercial men in England, who were the largest consumers of the products.

of Egypt, reminded Mr. Corkling of a visit he had paid him at his factory in Mansourah, a year or two ago, to see for himself the processes of cleaning and pressing cotton up-country, and finally requested the Mayor to say to the people of Manchester that it was with extreme regret he had been compelled, owing to the shortness of his stay in England, to decline the invitation they had sent to His Highness to pay a visit to a city whose fortunes were so intimately bound up with those of his own territory. He added a few civil words of apology for not having been able, on account of the number of imperial and royal guests who had been with him, to pay any personal attention to the general body of guests, and the deputation then withdrew, highly gratified with their reception.

The departure of His Highness the Khedive for Alexandria at this particular time deprived his English guests of a pleasure to which they had for some time been looking

forward. It had been noticed that the *invites* from the Continent—more particularly the French—were given to growling and dissatisfaction with the arrangements made for their reception and maintenance at the various hotels to which they were relegated, and the fact was severely commented on by the English, most of whom heeded not the little unavoidable discomfort such extraordinary crowds gave rise to, feeling that every one, from Ismail Pacha downwards, was doing his best day after day to make their visit to Egypt pleasant and agreeable. Moreover, they were delighted, when occasion required, to take the will for the deed, to laugh at a little buffeting, and to acknowledge amid it all that the Viceroy had right royally entertained his guests. They appreciated also the magnitude and difficulty of the task allotted to those officers whose duty it was to look after the comfort of strangers, and if possible to please everybody; and they felt that some expression of

thanks was due and would be graceful, the more so as ill-conditioned persons had given vent to feelings of quite another nature—because His Highness had not made special arrangements to pay their laundress's bill, or to provide them with pocket money to pay away as *bakshish* to porters at the railway stations. These are no supposititious grievances: claims were urged by more than one person of the above and similar kinds. It was at once determined, therefore, that an address should be presented to His Highness by his British guests, and a committee was appointed to draw one up. Lord Houghton and Mr. Hawkshaw were specially energetic in the matter; the address lay for signatures at Shepherd's; and few who had an opportunity of attaching their names thereto, failed to do so. This address, the text of which I subjoin, was to have been presented to His Highness by Earl Dudley or Lord Houghton the very day after His High-

ness, as it happened, left Cairo for Alexandria :—

“ We the undersigned guests of your Highness the Khedive desire before leaving Egypt to express our cordial thanks to your Highness for the magnificent hospitality you have extended to us throughout our sojourn in your dominions. We wish also to express our appreciation of the uniform courtesy and attention we have received, in the performance of their arduous duties, from those to whom your Highness entrusted our reception.

“ We rejoice that through your kindness we have been enabled to witness the inauguration of the great enterprise now so happily accomplished, and have also been placed in a position to note the progress made in other important works for the development of the resources of Egypt.

“ With sincere wishes that your Highness's life may be prolonged to see the completion of those plans which you have initiated and countenanced, and which we trust may have for their result the improvement of your country and the happiness of your people, we have the honour to subscribe ourselves,” &c.

The address was entrusted to Colonel Stanton, who kindly promised to deliver it to His Highness at the earliest suitable moment.

Before concluding this chapter, it may not be amiss to mention that, despite the expressions of dissatisfaction one heard from certain quarters above indicated, no inclination to leave Egypt was evinced by the grumblers. Indeed it seemed as if the most greatly dissatisfied were the most anxious to stay, for several broad hints, in the shape of announcements that steamers were ready to leave for Marseilles and Brindisi on certain dates, were entirely disregarded by those for whom they were intended. It was evident that many had made up their minds to winter in Egypt if possible in the position in which they then were, trying and uncomfortable though it was ; and, as a part of the programme, urgently solicited His Highness, through His Excellency Nubar Pacha, for boats, properly provisioned and equipped, that they might spend a couple of months on the Nile. Others who had already 'done' the Nile at the Viceroy's expense, suggested that, in order to vary the enter-

tainment as much as possible, a steamer should be provided for them, in which they might cruise along the coast of Syria, visiting the Holy Land from Joppa, and thereafter continuing their journey homewards, calling at all the pleasant cities of the Levant, and starring it there free of expense. And for aught that is known to the contrary, their modest request may have been complied with by their too indulgent host.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CANAL AS WE LEFT IT.

Cairo, November 24.

LEAVING now the *fêtes* and festivities with which the opening of the Canal was surrounded, let us consider for a little the position and prospects of the Canal itself. It may be thought by some that an undue amount of space has been allotted to the gaieties of the fortnight ; but those who entertain that opinion cannot have been in Egypt and have seen for themselves how wholly even the soberest of people gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the hour, and how fully every hour was occupied in some such way as were the hours dwelt upon in the preceding paragraphs. Grave and learned M. P.s, sedate mayors, presidents and delegates of the first commercial cities in the world, who at home are all for business, in fact all sorts and condi-

tions of men, made a point of attending each rout and revel—not that they cared much for that sort of thing, but because it was part of the Viceroy's programme, and they regarded it, if not a religious, at least a loyal duty to be present thereat. So ball, and turf, and pic-nic do not occupy so much of the report as they did of the actual proceedings. Besides, it was difficult in the midst of all these things to form a calm independent judgment for one's-self on the various points connected with the future of the Canal, or to get a deliberate expression of opinion from any one else. But, everything over, it was the Canal and its prospects that formed the subject of conversation wherever friends or foreigners met, just as it was the universal topic before the whirl of excitement set in at Port-Said. And how different was the tone of the conversation one listened to at Cairo after the 23rd from what was heard in those very same salons about the 15th. Whereas formerly the prevailing feeling was one of deep

doubt and confirmed scepticism, latterly it was frankly admitted on every hand that the Canal is already a grand fact which commerce even now cannot ignore, and that, if all goes well, it will be still grander fact after the space of a year or two. It was such an easy matter to form and pronounce one's opinion regarding the Canal after steaming through it in an ocean steamer, one of fifty, and beholding in the water of the Red Sea the magnificent fleet which but three days before rode at anchor in the Mediterranean. And when, in the rear of the procession, first one steamer with cargo from Marseilles to China, and then another from Marseilles to Bombay—the pioneers of new lines—came dropping through, the answer of ninety-nine men in every hundred as to what they thought of M. Lesseps' undertaking might have been written before they opened their mouths to reply—“Why there it is—there is no mistake about it.” Even those whose interests would not have suffered had the undertaking proved a

fiasco, admitted the correctness of the general verdict, and their own full agreement therewith. That those acquainted with the shipping that frequents the harbours of Alexandria and Suez may judge for themselves as to the class of vessels that have really passed and repassed the Canal in safety, it will be well to subjoin the list made up at Suez on November 22nd : it will thus be better known what is meant by calling the Canal open than when it is merely said that some fifty steamers have traversed it. Unfortunately, I have not been able to secure either tonnage or dimensions; but many nautical men must know at least some of the vessels, and can judge for themselves; and for the guidance of people generally, it will be safe to state that the vessels as a rule drew about 14 feet of water, a few drawing over 16 feet—of which the Russian frigate was one:—

1. The Khedive's yacht, with His Highness on board, which preceded the procession by several hours, and formed no part of it.

2. *L'Aigle*.—Yacht of Her Majesty the Empress of the French.
3. *Greif*.—Austrian man-of-war, with the Emperor on board.
4. *Hirthe*.—Prussian man-of-war, having on board the Crown Prince and the Prince of Hesse.
5. *Falk*.—Dutch man-of-war, with Prince and Princess Henry of Holland.
6. *Psyche*.—English corvette with the Ambassador (Mr. Elliot) and Admiral Milne.
7. *Newport*.—English gun-boat.
8. *Rapid*.— Do. do.
9. *Werki*.—Russian man-of-war, with the Russian Ambassador on board.
10. *Grille*.—Prussian man-of-war.
11. *Actif*.—French despatch-boat, with Contre-Admiral Moulac.
12. *Forbin*.— Do. do.
13. *Salamandre*.—French corvette, which went to Ismailia on the 16th, to salute the fleet on its arrival.
14. *Pisezeable*.—Russian gun-boat.
15. *Bruat*.—French gun-boat, proceeding to the Indian Ocean.
16. *Dido*.—English packet.
17. *Vulcan*.—Austrian Lloyds.
18. *Elizabeth*.—Austrian man-of-war.

19. *Dolphin*.—Prussian man-of-war.
20. *Fiume*.—Egyptian steamer, of considerable size.
21. *Grignano*.—Austrian steam transport.
22. *Peluse*.—Messageries Imperiales, having on board the Council of Administration of the "Compagnie Universelle."
23. *Thabor*.—Messageries Imperiales bound for Japan.
24. *Deerhound*.—English pleasure steam yacht, of Royal Yacht Club.
25. *Lyux*.—Do. do.
26. *Hawk*.—English steamer: the well-known telegraph vessel.
27. *General Kotzebuck*.—Russian, de la "Compagnie de Navigation et du Commerce."
28. *Touareg*.—French steamer, of the "Societe Generale," chartered by a private party of gentlemen engaged in banking and commerce.
29. *Europe*.—Splendid French vessel, belonging to Fraissinet Pere et Fils.
30. *Principe Tomaso*.—Italian, of the "Compagnie Adriatico Orientale."
31. *Principe Amadeo*.—Do. do.
32. *Principe Oddone*.—Do. do.
33. *Pluto*.—Austrian Lloyds.
34. *Italia*.—Fine Italian steamer.
35. *Latif*.—Large Egyptian man-of-war. Only came to Ismailia, being difficult to steer.

36. *Delta*.—P. and O. Only came to Ismailia, the directors being very much dissatisfied with their place in the procession, which chanced to be nearly last.
37. *Sicilia*.—Italian; Rabattino and Co.
38. *Pelayo*.—Spanish steamer.
39. *Hum*.—Austrian gun-boat.
40. *America*.—Austrian Lloyds.
41. *Scibin*.—Egyptian : one of the Azizieh.
42. *Assiouth*.—Do. do.
43. *Behera*.—Do. do.
44. *Valdimir*.—Large Russian steamer—de la "Compagnie de Navigation et du Commerce."
45. *Anglica*.—French packet.
46. *Fauvette*.—French pleasure yacht.
47. *Cambria*.—Sailing ship towed by the *Fauvette*.
48. A Russian sailing ship towed by "No. 1" of the "Compagnie Universelle."
49. *Alexandra*.—Steamer of the "Compagnie Universelle."
50. *Louise et Marie*.—A steamer belonging to Messieurs Borel, Lavalley and Co.
51. Steamer, name unknown.

Besides the above, three Egyptian vessels of war, one of which was the *Senaar*, left Suez for Ismailia, on November 16th, to

meet the fleet at Lake Timsah, and proceeded right through to that rendezvous without let or hindrance at a speed averaging nearly nine knots an hour; these returned Suez in the procession, bringing the number of vessels up to 54. Also two vessels belonging to the Messageries Imperiales, *L'Alphee* and *Erymanthe*, making 56. On the 23rd *Le Diamant*, a French man-of-war not unknown in Bombay Harbour, proceeded to Port-Said; as also did the *Curacoa*, a man-of-war returning home to the Netherlands from the Philippines. On Friday, the 27th, three steamers and one sailing vessel reached Suez from Port-Said—the *Asie* of Messrs. Fraissinet, Pere et Fils of Marseilles, bound for Bombay, the *Godavery* of the Messageries Imperiales, bound for China, an Egyptian steamer, and the sailing vessel *Noel*, from Bordeaux for Bombay, with a cargo of wines. The majority of the aforementioned vessels returned to Port-Said even more quickly than they had come, and no doubt

others will have come through during the past week; so that it is quite within the mark to speak of the Canal as having been traversed a hundred times by sea-going ships. And not only has it been traversed merely; but the progress of these vessels while in the Canal, the comparatively few *contretemps* that occurred, the facility with which these *contretemps* could be rectified—all surpassed the expectation of the most sanguine. It is true several vessels did get aground, and caused some delay to those in rear, and consequent heart-burning and hard language among those on board their rearward convoy; but those vessels can easily be named as exceptions, and their ill-luck most satisfactorily accounted for. They were the *Latif*, a fine Egyptian vessel, admirably handled by a most experienced Captain, but everybody knew she *would not* steer, and considered it folly of the Viceroy to allow her to enter. This, be it noted, was said long before the *Latif* started. Then there

was the *Peluse*, one of the Messageries, which was a source of much trouble and the object of terrible maledictions, for nothing but bad steering accounts for her chequered log, as she always got aground where the water was deepest. Then there was the *Garbieh*, magnificently run on the bank near Kantara by a pilot who had just come on board, and who, to his eternal disgrace be it said, reversed an order of the Captain's, the result of which reversal was the calamity in question. He slackened speed in passing some barges, with a corner just ahead; and so, with no way on to speak of, the *Garbieh*, instead of coming round at the call of her helm, held on her course, and there stuck, clean out of the channel. "Ah," said the Captain of the Austrian frigate immediately astern, "You don't know how to go round a corner; watch me." And he rowed back to his ship, got on the bridge, gave the order "Go ahead easy," which he did till opposite the *Garbieh*, when he shouted

“Full speed ahead—helm hard over,” and round he went in mid channel without the least difficulty—so completely was the Egyptian dry-docked. The example of the Austrian was followed by more than one other vessel in the course of an hour, till the *Garbieh* was again hauled into deep water, her position worse than ever, for she had got a rope firmly twisted round her screw, rendering backing or going ahead equally out of the question. This may be maintained—that the grounding of every vessel in the Canal was due either to bad steering, or to some want of sympathy between the vessel and her helm, rendering her disobedient thereto.

This may not be an inconvenient stage at which to consider the style of ship present experience has shewn most fitted for the navigation of the Canal. In the first place, we have most careful and complete soundings, taken every mile, by competent men on board the *Cambria*, one of the English

steam pleasure yachts which made the tour on the 17th and following days. These soundings rather surprised people; but yet none can impugn their accuracy. In the Port-Said Basin, the line shewed 30 and 27 feet; 30 at "Les Iles des Pelicans;" 30 at Ras el Ech, the first station on the Suez side of Port-Said; 27, 29, 30 through Lake Menzaleh and as far as Kantara, about 28 miles from Port-Said; beyond Kantara we find 27, 24 and even 22 feet, which presently, however, increases to 28, and that depth is preserved all the way to Ismailia. Beyond Ismailia we again find bottom at 22 feet, but this is only a patch, for next trial gives 27 and 30. At Scrapeum, slightly out of mid channel, away from those troublesome rocks, they found 26; after that 28, 30, and even 32. The basin of the Bitter Lakes gives 30, 31, and 32; thence to Chalouf, 30; then for four miles or so from 28 to 31; above Little Chalouf we find 21—the shallowest part of all—then

23, 24, 28, and 30, on to Suez. Now it is plain that on the opening day no steamer drawing over 20 feet of water could have passed through, and none attempted to do so ; but depths of 26 feet and upwards so vastly predominate over depths below that amount, that but little remains to be done to give every foot of the Canal a depth of at least 24 feet. Had it been possible to postpone the opening only another fortnight, and to allow the dredges to prosecute their work uninterruptedly, it is the opinion of those best informed that the 24 feet would have been ensured in that time. But that delay could not be. Nor, now that the Canal has once been opened for traffic, is it possible to prevent vessels of sorts from coming through, thus causing serious obstruction to the dredges and the work ; for those ponderous machines must be moved from mid channel away into shallow water, and thus out of position, to admit of the passage of even a tiny vessel of say 500 tons.

Under these circumstances, it may take two or three months to ensure the depth stated above, which I have taken as being probably the maximum that any vessel will calculate on for some time, *i. e.* till the widening, &c., of the Channel in various places has been completed and a degree of finish imparted to the works to which they do not at present pretend. To say nothing, then, of the draught of water of vessels that have already passed through safely, it may confidently be asserted that in a few months' time vessels drawing over twenty feet may take the Canal unhesitatingly. To keep within the prescribed limit as to draught, and yet carry a large cargo, it is not improbable that the steamer of the future will have considerable breadth of beam. I do not consider that this will be any great objection or interfere in any way with their passage if they are smartly handled, for there is no reason to believe but that the channel is everywhere of the width

stated. Be that as it may, the deep channel is carefully buoyed out, and any steamer in Bombay Harbour might pass easily between those buoys. But whether steamers carry much cargo or not, they must not be of excessive length at present. There are sharp curves at which the chances against such a vessel would be ten to one. There is one in Lake Ballah ; there are two between El Guisr and Ismailia ; and there is a fourth between Lake Timsah and Serapeum. The middle two especially are beset with difficulty, ought never to have been there at all, and *must* be removed before long. It is at these curves especially, and in a less degree at others not mentioned, that the only difficulty of managing the ship (provided, of course, there is water enough in the Canal) arises. Besides all this, and more particularly while the aforementioned curves remain, steamers must be in every respect tractable, answering both helm and jib readily. Ship-builders and experienced sea-

men could no doubt suggest a great many other points, but those, I think, are the chief. And there is another thing that will yet have to be insisted on—*viz.*, the total absence of pilots. There is absolutely no need for them on board; in fact they are in the way, and a probable if not actual source of danger and difficulty rather than anything else. The channel is clearly laid down, and the captain has but to keep his eyes open to see it, and only to have his vessel in command to keep it. The captain gives his orders directly to the men, whom he knows, and what is of greater, in fact of first importance, the captain knows his ship, how she behaves under certain circumstances, and all about her, which the pilot can never do. This last forms a positive reason against compelling vessels to carry pilots, in addition to the more negative one of their utter uselessness on board.

In addition to the straightening of the curves, there yet remains much to be done

before the Canal can be pronounced to be in the state in which it is to remain. Chiefly has it to be widened in several places, and first of all at El Guisr. Operations were in active progress there as the procession passed; hundreds of Arabs were at work "by the piece" and hundreds of camels and donkeys were toiling up and down the steep banks with their loads of clay and gravel. The donkeys are far better fitted for that species of work than the camel; the latter require to be led backwards and forwards; not so the former. As soon as its panniers are filled, a vigorous shove and a shout ("*Empshee ya kelb*," "Go along, O dog," a writer in *Macmillan* says) sends it off on its toilsome journey to the top, where men are ready to unload it, and with a similar admonition to the above, send it down again for more. Scores of donkeys in a row might be seen thus ascending, halting not to compare notes with each other, nor loitering in any way, though there was no task-master near, but following patiently

the little track before them. At Serapeum, too, that gypsum rock must be effectually disposed of, no matter at what sacrifice of powder. That is not expected to be more than a work of weeks, as great resources are concentrated there. Next, there is a good deal to be done near Little Chalouf, likewise in the way of widening. And lastly, throughout much of the way from Port-Said to Suez, the banks requiresloping, rounding off, and general conservation. At Port-Said, Ismailia, and Suez much remains to be done to provide wharfage accommodation; but that can no doubt be supplied as quickly the demand for it will make itself felt.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONSERVATION AND MAINTENANCE.

THIS brings me to consider what, in the way of conservation and maintenance, the Canal is likely to require, premising that it is taken for granted that the works will be completed in a workman-like manner, and that I do not write with any pretension to be an engineer. Indeed I give the opinion of men qualified to form one rather than any opinion of my own. A great deal of trouble from sand-drift has been predicted in certain quarters, and constant dredging has been spoken of as the only means whereby this drifting sand can be prevented from gradually and surely filling what they call "the stagnant ditch."

Most probably this difficulty appears greatest in the estimation of those who know the desert and the sand storm only by the

hearing of the ear, and have not had an opportunity of forming an opinion on the spot. At any rate, its formidable nature is an attribute that exists only in their imagination. Drifting sand is not to be greatly feared, even though no special precautions against it are adopted. A consideration of the nature of the surface soil through which the Canal passes will shew this. There will be no drift to speak of between the Red Sea and the Bitter Lakes, as the sand there is generally compact and mixed with gravel. Nor will there be any between the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah, except probably for eight or nine miles near Serapeum. There may be some drifting between Lake Timsah and Lake Balla, near El Guisr; there can of course be none in Lake Menzaleh. Altogether, the drift, be it serious or trifling, can only extend over some nineteen miles; and there it can be checked by proper and very simple precautions, as is done in Russia and other places.

It is to be noticed, too, that the Fresh-water Canal, which is verily "a stagnant ditch" in many places, shews no decided tendency to get silted or drifted up; why, then, should this agency be so destructive in the case of the larger work when its effects are imperceptible on the smaller? It remains to be seen whether the tides and currents will produce any serious result as regards the banks and channel. Probably the basin and canal mouth at Port-Said will go on silting up to some extent; but the process, though rapid from a geological point of view, will be very slow from an engineering one—so slow as to be entirely within the control of a single dredge, should dredging be necessary in default of some better scheme for counteracting the mischief. Then there is the wash of steamers to be taken into consideration. Will that be such as to injure and undermine the soft banks, causing land slips and other obstructions? It is believed not. Although at present there

is often to be seen on either side of the ship, just upon her quarter, a current flowing with the force and velocity of a mill-stream, carrying sand, mud, and stones along with it, that current exists only where the water is shallow, the canal not having yet been deepened over its whole width. The deepening and completion of the work from bank to bank does away with this wash, as was repeatedly shown by demonstration ; for vessels drawing 14 feet of water, and proceeding at the rate of 5 or $5\frac{1}{2}$ knots an hour, caused no wash to speak of when they had plenty of deep water on either side. Providing, therefore, as before observed, that the work is finished in thorough style, as there is no reason to doubt will be the case, it is the opinion of qualified engineers that the cost of maintenance will not be excessive, and that five vessels of over 1,000 tons each per day will provide funds enough to pay interest for the total outlay, as also to maintain the Canal in perfect order. What-

ever income might be secured beyond that accruing from these five vessels, the shareholders would have to apply in whatever way they considered best. This is as cheerful a view of the financial prospects as may be ventured upon, short of foreseeing a dividend for the original shareholders, which no prophet has yet given them much ground to hope for.

It were useless to speculate as to the precise effect the opening of this great highway will have upon trade and commerce between Europe and the East, as indications of increased activity and of the founding of new interest are every week forthcoming. The French and Italians are the first in the field, rejoicing—more particularly the latter—at the opportunity now afforded them of extending their commercial area, which has of late, from a variety of causes, been somewhat circumscribed. But it must not be supposed that either French or Italians are at present ready to establish such lines of

communication as we have been accustomed to, for now many years, between India and the West ; to do that will take them time as it will take other people. Probably the Austrian Lloyds will be the first new line of any consequence, unless the Messageries Imperiales adopt some move of which rumour has not yet got hold. But after all the hurry and dust and smoke are over—a few years hence—it will be found that the immense resources and wide connection of the P. and O. have told their own tale in the struggle, and that that Company is holding its own as decidedly as it has done in the past, though necessarily on very different terms. And its closest rivals will be English lines, not Continental.

One thing has already been made clear—that the Khedive does not mean the overland traffic to go by railway any longer than is absolutely necessary, if he can help it. Already the merchants of Alexandria are complaining of obstructions offered to them in

the conduct of their business, with a view, it is believed, of inducing them to establish Port-Said as the *entrepôt* of Egypt, or at any rate to make the Canal their means of communication with their correspondents and constituents in the East. And gentle pressure of the kind alluded to cannot but produce its effect in the direction desired. Self-interest and the necessity of self-protection will drive merchants, even against their will, to adopt that route which circumstances—no matter what—render the most expeditious and safe.

And what will be Bombay's share of the increased traffic between Europe and India? A very little consideration will, I think, show that she must have all, or nearly all, be that increase greater or less. For the new companies about to be formed, and the new lines to be established by companies already extant, will almost, to a certainty, have their head-quarters at Bombay, and further eastward than

that they will not go. Were they to sail to Calcutta, say, they lose a fortnight's time over every voyage—a consideration of the first magnitude; besides that, they require a coaling station and agency at Galle, which involves extra expenditure, and the length of the voyage involves risk for which Suez Canal steamers generally will probably not be in all respects prepared. The cargo, too, would by no means have such speedy delivery as it would if sent overland from or to Bombay, and speed will henceforth be even a more important matter than it has been in the past. Indeed no one seriously disputes but that Bombay will profit more than any other Eastern city by the success of the Canal; and I have repeatedly heard it affirmed by people possessing a wonderful intimacy with exports and imports, that her trade will, in the course of a few years, be increased by some three millions annually. Now what will that be actually worth to her? That question, too, I have

heard answered in this wise—"It will be worth so much to her that she might now, could she raise the money, finish the Suez Canal right off for the shareholders, and ten or twelve years hence be the gainer."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EASTWARD HO !

On Board the "Nubia," December 12.

ON November 26th I found myself back again in Suez, on my way to India. None of my fellow-travellers were there; how different from what it was a week before ! Then all was the excitement of glorious success; on every hand one saw the intoxicating effects of glory. For a time reason succumbed to the dazzle of triumph. How changed all was on our return. Who could but

" Feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed ?"

I sought variety in the Casino, and barely escaped getting into a row for hissing the prima donna, when, dressed as Joan of Arc, she came before the footlights and sang the

Marseillaise Hymn. I had loyally followed and passionately worshipped the Empress Eugenie during the *fêtes* recorded above, and to hear a French revolutionary hymn sung before the echo of the cheers with which Her Majesty had everywhere been greeted had died in my ears was too much under the circumstances. No sooner had the cheers that welcomed Joan of Arc subsided, than alone in the centre of the hall, *un Anglais* hissed vigorously. Counter cheers followed, to which he again replied with hisses, and shout of "Vive l'Impératrice." The commotion was becoming serious, so much so that, in order to be rid of so determined a loyalist, they mobbed him and walked him out of the room in the crowd. Prudent ideas of self-preservation prevented him from returning, so he "did the rounds" of Suez, attended by a faithful Arab, whose godfathers and godmothers had called him Abdulla, and retired to rest in the Suez Hotel.

After a couple of days' waiting beyond

the usual time, in consequence of the non-arrival of the Marseilles mails, the P. and O. S. S. *Nubia*, Captain Wilkinson, left Suez for Bombay about noon of the 29th ultimo. Those who saw the courtyard of the Suez Hotel before the passengers were embarked, were agreeably surprised to find, on going on board, that most of the Calcutta passengers intended proceeding in the *Candia*, by the Galle route, and that the crush on the *Nubia* would not be so fearful as was at first anticipated. An hour or two, and all had got settled down in very comfortable circumstances, with every prospect of making a pleasant voyage. Nor were these expectations disappointed ; for a commodious vessel, delightful weather, kind and gentlemanly officers, and pleasant society all contributed to make the days pass as agreeably as days passed at sea can ever be expected to do. As regards the weather, it was so genial that many declared they had never found the Red Sea so unlike itself ; no one was heard

to complain of the heat ; some, indeed, sought shelter from the breeze—a head one for the most part—which blew pretty constantly all the way down to Aden. It even rained in the Red Sea—off Jibbel Teer, if I remember rightly, where there was somewhat of a swell one morning, though not enough to cause any appreciable amount of discomfort. The day after leaving Suez, the *Nubia* passed the P. and O. Company's *China*, from China to Suez. That vessel had gone to China for a cargo of silk-worms' eggs, but, it was said, had been disappointed in not finding the promised eggs ready, and had to return to Suez without them, to resume her place on the Bombay line. The same day, the troop-ship *Junna*, with the 14th Brigade of Royal Artillery on board, was sighted on her way to Suez. Next day, a French gun-boat was passed, believed to be *en route* for Cherbourg, through the Suez Canal, her commission in Eastern waters having expired.

Notwithstanding the prevailing head

winds, Aden was reached early on the 4th of December, before the *Sumatra*, from Bombay, with the Indian mails of November 27, had left. Of course most people went ashore, not expecting to see anything novel, but solely for the sake of variety. The steamer was advertised to sail at 9 p.m., yet all the passengers were on board long before that hour, most of them profuse in their expressions of delight at finding themselves once more under the *ægis* of the P. and O., with the prospect of another week yet to run before so pleasant a time of it should come to a termination. With some sixty passengers, a fair proportion of whom were ladies, and with a captain and officers who strove constantly to promote the comfort and happiness of every one on board, it would be strange had the days and evenings hung heavily on the hands of youth. They certainly did not do so on board the *Nubia*, for breakfast was never long over before indications of coming amusement of various kinds.

might be observed. There would come the quartermaster, all smiles, with an armful of croquet hoops and mallets, which the purser arranged with mathematical precision "abaft this notice" on the quarter deck, while sides were being chosen and the terms of the tournament decided by the ladies and gentlemen whose skill and dexterity were to be put to the test, or frustrated, as the case might be, by a pitch or a roll to starboard. Here might be seen a steward with two or three chess boards and boxes, over which the more studious and intellectual of the company intended passing an hour or so in solemn meditation. Away forward, could be heard the rattle of quoits, and the shout of triumph which indicated that the score of some well-known player had all at once taken a leap of ten backwards. Then when the shades of evening closed o'er us, and to play quoits and croquet was no longer possible, whist reigned supreme below, and mirth and song above. There were several ad-

mirable singers among the ladies, and many was the sweet solo or delightful duet with which they charmed us night after night. A little later, and the gentlemen took up the comic strain—something with a good chorus being preferred, till the quarter-master, sorry to interrupt us, but jealous of “the rules of this establishment,” which “must be observed,” came and called for “God save the Queen,” thus concluding the performance.

So it went on, and soon it became apparent from the preparations one could see being made, that another vein of talent on board ship was going to break out. A crop of new appellations sprung up, shewing what was in the wind. Mr. A. might be heard saluted as “Ricketts,” Mr. B. as “Mayor of Canterbury,” and somebody else, to whose downy cheeks a sharp instrument had for the first time on board been applied, as “Miss Verner,” making it plain that the farce of “Hit him hard, he’s got no friends,” was in preparation. And not that only;

for the presence of a "Pitcher" and a "Tosser" proclaimed that the "Area Belle" was also the object of those young men's attentions. In cabins, too, or in quiet nooks where prying eyes were not likely to wander, fair fingers were busily plying needle and thread to make a dress for "Penelope," or a regulation helmet for the policeman; and it is but fair to say, that, but for the kind co-operation of one of the ladies on board, the difficulties of the costumier would have been insurmountable. Friday—the evening before our arrival in Bombay—was the time appointed, and soon after mid-day Captain Wilkinson had all the available resources of the ship turned out, for the erection of a stage for the players, which, under his own personal superintendence and that of the chief officer, was in every way ready by the hour appointed. And not ready merely, but tastefully decorated with flags and replete with appliances which none could have expected. A portable stage—with which, by

the bye, it is a pity every P. and O. ship is not provided—could not have been made to answer the purpose better. Both of the farces* represented passed off splendidly, keeping the audience in roars of laughter. Songs were introduced between the pieces, most of them in character, and were rendered in several instances in a style perfectly inimitable. That nothing might be wanting of the accessories to be met with in the most fashionable houses of resort, an ancient dame appeared in the intervals, and vociferously pursued her calling in the ginger-bread, orange, and lemonade line; while near the entrance, or wherever duty called, a policeman in full dress strutted proudly up and down, repressing disorder by his mere presence, or by other means when occasion required. Some villain, thinking to turn the laugh against the guardian of the public peace, called upon him for a song; but for this emergency, too, X. was perfectly prepared, and sang till he was cheered—I had almost said to the echo.

I have seldom seen a more delighted party leave any public performance than the one that on Friday night adjourned downstairs for supper in the saloon of the *Nubia*.

Such were the feelings of esteem and gratitude Captain Wilkinson won for himself during the voyage from all the passengers, that they determined, before leaving the vessel, to express to him their deep sense of obligation for his courtesy and kindness, and their good wishes for himself and his officers. The following address was, therefore, unanimously adopted and signed, after which it was presented to Captain Wilkinson by Colonel Nassau Lees:—

“DEAR CAPTAIN WILKINSON,—We are now near the end of as pleasant a voyage as we have ever made, or care to make, and desire before leaving the *Nubia* to assure you that our reminiscences of the past fortnight will ever be such as we shall delight to cherish.

“We have noticed, and are very grateful for the constant attention you have personally manifested to promote the happiness of

every one on board; and, while wishing you and your officers all prosperity, for ourselves we desire no better fortune than that, on our return from India, we may sail with you, not to Suez only, but right through to the Continent of Europe."

W. Nassau Lees, Lieut.-Col.

Isaac Watta.

Henry C. Pelly, 2nd Life Guards.

E. B. Horsford, Staff Corps.

E. Donovan, C.E.

T. D. Ker, Lieut.-Col.

H. Wallis, Jr.

A. R. Quincey.

E. D. Ravenscroft, C.S.

C. Herring.

W. C. Johnson.

E. D. Estill.

Marian Estill.

John Byron, Capt. 10th Regt.

Mrs. Byron.

D. Anderson.

Mrs. Anderson.

Gillham Hewlett.

Emily May.

Henrietta V. Hunter.

H. R. Goad.

Fanny M. Goad.

W. D. Cowley, Chaplain, Bengal
Establishment.

Margt. C. Cowley.

T. Login, C.E.

Swinton Melville.

Charlotte Melville.

W. Woodburn.

Isabella C. Woodburn.

Eleanor Watt.

R. J. Clarke.

Mrs. W. W. Clarke.

R. C. Walker.

R. Maxwell.

A. S. Aird.

E. Mionnet.

E. P. Burrows.

B. W. Chambers, Lieut.-Col.

R. Angus, Jr.

Duncan Macpherson.

E. Moir.

W. B. Ferris.

A. Pengelly.

L. Mackinnon.

A. E. Wild.

James Greaves.

W. Henman.

John Watson.

Wm. Haworth.

Wm. Newton.

A. Preston.

A. F. Shepherd.

